

S. Arabia, Yemen continue talks

SANAA (AFP) — Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh met Tuesday with Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef Ben Abdul Aziz for talks on mapping out the border between their two countries. Mr. Saleh asked Prince Nayef to transmit a message to Saudi King Fahd on the long-running border dispute, Yemeni sources said. The two countries signed last year an agreement in principle assigning the disputed provinces of Najran, Assir and Jizan to Saudi Arabia, demarcating their border and normalising relations. They have now agreed on the demarcation of the border running from east to west, which includes the three provinces, but have yet to map out parts of the border running north to south.

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Jordan elected WFP board member

ROME (Petra) — Jordan was elected member of the Rome-based World Food Programme (WFP) Executive Board. Jordan's election to the membership of the board of the international body was made during the annual conference of the WFP's Executive Board, currently held here. The WFP, a subsidiary of the United Nations, supports agricultural projects in 90 countries all over the world. The programme has provided JD 85 million worth of support for agricultural development projects in Jordan. The programme is expected to approve JD 16 million in further assistance to Jordan.

All progress in peace process and treaties in jeopardy if Israel does not fulfill its commitments — King

Agreements are sacred and cannot be tampered with
Netanyahu has to deal with Arafat as equal partner
Deadlock could lead to 'everything imaginable...including revival of 1991 when Netanyahu had to wear a gas mask'

AMMAN (J.T.) — All progress that has been achieved in Arab-Israeli peacemaking, including the peace treaties that Egypt and Jordan have signed with Israel, will be in jeopardy if Israel does not live up to its commitment and fulfill all accords it has signed with the Palestinians, His Majesty King Hussein said in comments published on Tuesday.

The King, in an interview with the London-based Al Sharq Al Awsat daily, called on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to work hard to finalise Middle East peace and to deal with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat as an equal partner in the search for peace.

"In the current situation, if we do not stride strongly forward to achieve peace, everything imaginable can happen, including a revival of 1991 when Netanyahu...not that I want that to happen...wore his gas mask on television," said the King in a reference to the Gulf war when Iraq lobbed missiles at Israel and Israelis had to wear gas masks for fear that the missiles contained chemical warheads.

King invites Dubai leader to visit

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Tuesday sent a message to Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashed Al Maktoum, the crown prince of Dubai and defence minister of the United Arab Emirates, dealing with bilateral relations and the latest developments in the region. The message, which was delivered to Sheikh Mohammed by Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd, also included an invitation by the King to Sheikh Mohammed to visit Jordan. Prince Ra'd also conveyed another message from His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, dealing with bilateral relations.

Regent visits Koura district

DEIR ABI SAID (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Tuesday called on citizens from Koura district to return to agriculture and to move from the capital to other cities and rural areas to communicate and interact with others within the context of constructive dialogue that can yield positive results. The Crown Prince's comments came during a tour to Koura district where he met with citizens from the different talks of life and listened to their demands. Several ministers, senators and deputies accompanied the Regent.

All that has been achieved, including the peace treaties signed by Egypt and Jordan, will come under a cloud of doubt if Israel does not fulfill its commitments and agreements it has signed with the Palestinians, said the King.

"Instead of seeing the three monotheistic religions joining forces in our region, our life will be in jeopardy if the Israeli-Palestinian problem is not solved. It is only by solving the Palestinian-Israeli problem, which is the root cause of the unrest in our region, will only avoid us the tragedy which might be caused by extremists and will end the suffering of all people in the region," the King said.

"The main question now is what are we going to do? Does Israel want to return to the fortress mentality and an arrogant feeling of power? I've had the chance to know the Israelis quite well and I'm worried about them," King Hussein said. "What worries me the most is my feeling that those with limited perspectives are affecting the chain of events, driving it in the opposite direction to peace."



It worries me that the minority can terrorise the majority in the region," he added.

Since he was elected in May, Mr. Netanyahu has refused to return occupied Arab lands for peace and then dragged his feet on peace pledges signed by the former Labour government.

King Hussein joined Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Arafat in Washington for an emergency peace summit last week. The United States called the summit to rescue peace talks after violence between Israeli troops and Palestinians left more than

70 people dead.

"The situation was very tense and I was afraid that if I didn't go and others didn't go, we would face an immediate crisis. The summit bought us all more time," the King added.

"I just hope that he (Netanyahu) realises that he has to deal with Arafat and the Palestinians as equal partners and not one who is of a lower level that he has to look down upon," he said.

King Hussein said Israel's decision to open a new entrance to a controversial tunnel along the compound walls of the Al Aqsa Mosque last month was totally an unacceptable move and contravened the peace agreements.

"The opening of this entrance was as if Netanyahu was telling the world that no one except Israel had anything to do with Jerusalem, which means undermining the principles on which the Oslo agreements were based," the King said.

The King expressed deep regret over the turn of events in the region and voiced sadness that narrow-minded elements are working against peace.

The King said Jordan was not informed at all or consulted about opening of the tunnel. "It came as a surprise to us, especially as I had met with Dore Gold, the Israeli prime minister's advisor, hours before the opening of the entrance and he did not say a single word about that subject," he said.

"If by opening the entrance Netanyahu was telling the world that he could do whatever he wants then this is totally unacceptable," said the King. "Old Jerusalem is a Holy City and belongs to all the followers of the descendants of Abraham: Muslims, Jews and Christians, and it must remain a symbol of peace for all. This means no one 'adopt' a unilateral move to change its features without a consensus."

"The Jordan-Israel peace treaty, the Israel-Egypt peace treaty and all that has been agreed on so far would not doubt be in question if there is no firm commitment to their implementation," the King said. "These are sacred agreements and do not tolerate any tampering."

(Continued on page 7)

Palestinians reject Israeli bid for new Hebron deal, but resume negotiations

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Palestinian negotiators rejected Israeli proposals for new security arrangements in the West Bank town of Hebron, and only returned to peace talks after a U.S. mediator called Yasser Arafat, a Palestinian official said Tuesday.

Mr. Arafat told reporters that Monday's talks were "not positive," before flying by Israeli military helicopter to the northern Israeli resort of Caesarea for lunch with Israeli President Ezer Weizman.

The trip marked Mr. Arafat's first public visit to Israel, and reaffirmed his standing as Israel's most important peace partner. However, Mr. Weizman's role is largely ceremonial, and no concrete results were expected from the talks beyond improving the strained atmosphere between Israel and the Palestinians.

Israeli and Palestinian negotiators resumed talks at 4 p.m. (1400 GMT) Tuesday at the Beit Hanoun (which Israel calls Erez) crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip, with President Bill Clinton's Middle East coordinator, Dennis Ross, attending.

Palestinians said Israel opened the talks on Monday with proposals that threaten to push the peace process back into crisis.

Palestinians said face-to-face negotiations on Monday

day, the first to discuss the long-delayed reduction of Israeli troops in Hebron since clashes that killed 59 Palestinians and 15 Israelis, lasted only 15 minutes.

Israeli security sources said it was 30 minutes but an official spokesman said it was "considerably longer."

"The Israeli side is still working to cancel the agreement, which threatens to undermine the whole peace process," Palestinian negotiator Hassan Asfour told Reuters. "It seems the Israelis did not understand or have not understood the political explosion yet."

Mr. Arafat told reporters in Gaza asking about the Monday negotiations: "I'm sorry it was not positive but we hope something new will happen today."

But elsewhere there appeared to be an easing of the tension that has gripped the area since clashes were triggered by Israel's opening of an archaeological tunnel near Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem last month.

On Monday evening, Mr. Ross intervened when the negotiations hit a deadlock after Israeli negotiators submitted a list of proposals for new security arrangements in Hebron. The Palestinians balked and said they were not ready to discuss the proposals.

Even considering the Israeli demands would be tantamount to renegotiating

U.S. mediator briefs Kabariti on progress of Beit Hanoun talks

PRIME MINISTER Abdul Karim Al Kabariti on Tuesday received a telephone call from the U.S. coordinator for the Middle East peace process, Dennis Ross, who briefed him on the latest developments in the Palestinian-Israeli talks, held over the past two days at the Beit Hanoun crossing point near Gaza.

Mr. Ross, who arrived in Gaza early this week to supervise the Palestinian-Israeli talks, which began on Sunday, briefed Mr. Kabariti on the progress made in the talks.

Mr. Kabariti stressed Jordan's keen interest in seeing positive and tangible results, and in ensuring the resumption of peace talks, in addition to "creating an atmosphere conducive to reaching a just and comprehensive peace."

Mr. Kabariti on Tuesday briefed the Cabinet on His Majesty King Hussein's meeting and talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton and senior U.S. officials during the King's visit to the U.S. to attend last week's Washington summit.

the terms of the Israeli troop pullback in Hebron, which had already been agreed on with Israel's previous government, said Ibrahim Kreisha, a senior Palestinian official involved in the peace talks.

"We absolutely do not accept these proposals," said Mr. Asfour. Mr. Ross then called Mr. Arafat, and only at the behest of the Palestinian leader did the Palestinian team return to the table, Mr. Kreisha said.

Mr. Netanyahu told parliament on Monday that he would pull Israeli troops out of most of the city, as promised in earlier peace agreements. However, Mr. Netanyahu said Israel has

the right to demand better security arrangements for the 450 Jewish settlers who live in the town of 120,000 Palestinians.

In Monday's negotiations, Israel said it wanted to retain the right of "hot pursuit" of suspected Palestinian assailants into areas that will come under Palestinian control, radio reports said.

Israel also wants to retain control over a broader area that links the Jewish enclaves with the Ibrahim Mosque, a site in the centre of town that is holy to Muslims and Jews.

The Palestinians offered instead that joint Israeli-

(Continued on page 7)



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, addresses Jordan Times staff during a visit he paid to the newspaper on Tuesday (Photo by Yusef Allan)

Regent, on royal visit to the Jordan Times, calls on Jordanians to take the lead in disseminating information about themselves Crown Prince Hassan: Failure of peace process spells disaster for all

By Jordan Times Staff Reporters

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, stressed yesterday that there was no viable alternative to the peace process, warning that the consequences of abandoning it could be disastrous for Arabs and Israelis alike.

Speaking during a visit to the Jordan Times, the Crown Prince echoed a warning by His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday that the region would be facing grim prospects if the peace process collapses.

The peace process should be approached within the broad framework of its social, security and economic dimensions, the Crown Prince told editors and reporters of the newspaper. "The international community's efforts to build a partnership for peace should also aim at building partnership for development and partnership for security."

Unless there is stability, the economic projects discussed in the Middle East and North Africa economic summits (in Casablanca and Amman) cannot materialise, Prince Hassan said, stressing the inevitability of progress on the three fronts if the peace process is to go forward.

On the conceptual framework of this process, the Crown Prince said, "I see it as a trilogy, that is, endeavours must be directed towards a partnership for peace, security

and development."

Prince Hassan said that the peace treaty which Jordan signed with Israel in October 1994 does offer the promise of valuable peace dividends, citing the water and other development projects that were discussed but whose implementation was delayed.

The Regent said that the pace of realising the dividends of peace for Jordan was slow, but added that this was a result not simply of the political troubles in the overall peace process but also because of positions adopted for "vested interests" (by certain groups in the country), apparently in reference to the vociferous opposition put up by headline politicians against normalisation of relations with Israel and some of the professional associations which have threatened to take punitive action against their members if they contacted Israel or Israelis.

The Regent said putting the peace process back on track was not enough to revitalise moves for realising the dividends of peace. "It would need some (interim) period of calm before such moves could be accelerated."

"The peace process is not the story of who hit whom," the Crown Prince said. "Peace should be looked at in its comprehensive form."

(Continued on page 7)

Turkish coalition ignores calls for its resignation over Libya fiasco

ANKARA (Agencies) — The coalition government of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan Tuesday turned a deaf ear to mounting opposition calls to resign after what the press termed as Turkey's humiliation by Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi.

"The government will continue to perform successfully," Mr. Erbakan's spokesman Abdullah Gul told Turkish reporters in the Nigerian capital of Lagos, the premier's third stopover in his African tour also covering Egypt and Libya.

Colonel Qadhafi, at a joint press conference with Mr. Erbakan in Tripoli Saturday, slammed Ankara's friendly relations with Israel and said he supported the creation of a Kurdish homeland — a taboo in Turkey which has been battling separatist Kurds for 12 years.

The flamboyant Libyan leader also mocked Turkey's penchant for the West — calling Turkey a "country under Western occupation" — its membership in the North Atlantic

Treaty Organisation (NATO) and its friendly ties with the United States.

The stunned Erbakan had no ready reply other than to thank his host meekly for his hospitality during the three-day visit.

The Turkish opposition lambasted both Col. Qadhafi's remarks and Mr. Erbakan's insistence to visit Libya despite the Foreign Ministry's opposition and strong U.S. criticism.

Two left-wing opposition parties called Monday and Tuesday for a vote of no confidence in the government and former Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz, leader of the conservative main opposition Motherland Party, said he would seek to topple the government.

But Mr. Erbakan's pro-Islamic Welfare Party has rallied around him Tuesday as did his coalition partners, the conservative True Path Party of Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller.

"Efforts to oust this government are useless," said Hasan Ekinci, True Path's deputy chairman.

"The opposition will never find the necessary number of parliamentary votes to topple the government."

Welfare and True Path together have a majority of 281 deputies in the 550-seat parliament and were also supported by a seven-seat ultra-right-wing party in a July vote of confidence.

However, political analysts said the opposition expected to get support from some defectors from Mrs. Ciller's True Path Party, angered by the Libya scandal, in parliamentary discussions for a vote of no confidence.

Interior Minister Mehmet Agar, a leading True Path member, has publicly objected to Mr. Erbakan's Libya visit.

The motions presented by the Democratic Left Party and the Republican People's Party accuse Mr. Erbakan's government "of having sidelined experienced cadres" of the Turkish foreign affairs service and "having deviated from

(Continued on page 7)

Pro-government candidates secure majority in Kuwait

KUWAIT (Agencies) — Kuwait's opposition lost its domination of parliament in Monday's elections with pro-government deputies apparently securing a majority, analysts said on Tuesday as results were announced.

They said pro-government deputies, backed by ministers who become ex-officio members of parliament (MPs), could easily muster a majority in the new house.

But Muslim fundamentalist MPs, both Shi'ite and Sunni, and pro-Islamists also made a strong showing, securing close to 20 seats.

The outgoing house was opposition-dominated and had 50 elected MPs and 11 minister members.

Analysts said liberal MPs now had between seven and eight seats. Officially there are no political parties in Kuwait.

Out of some 700,000 Kuwaitis about 107,000 males had the right to vote to select 50 new parliament

members from 230 candidates. Analysts said turnout soared in the final hours on Monday to exceed 75 per cent in most districts.

Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah on Tuesday accepted the resignation of the government in line with the constitution.

Islamists have vowed to launch a new drive to make Islamic law the source of all legislation after failing to do so in the last assembly.

Among the losers was Education Minister and liberal MP Ahmad Al Rabei, who was attacked by Islamists in the last assembly.

With political parties banned in Kuwait, all the candidates officially ran as independents, making any interpretation of the composition of parliament difficult because of varying political alliances.

In the last parliament, for example, Islamist MPs several times backed the government.

Parliament has the power to draw up and vote on legislation which must receive emiri approval, but MPs have limited opportunities to influence policy inside the government as the cabinet can include as little as one MP.

Some 230 Islamist, liberal, tribal and other candidates were competing in the election in this emirate.

Those eligible to vote in Monday's election accounted for only 15 per cent of Kuwaiti citizens. Women, some naturalised Kuwaitis and members of the armed forces were excluded from voting.

Women staged several protests during the run-up to the elections and demonstrated twice on Monday to call for the right to vote and stand as candidates.

Parliament, first elected in 1963, is renewed every four years, but it has been suspended twice by emiri decree between 1976 and 1981 and again between 1986 and 1992.



REGENT VISITS JORDAN TIMES: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, chats with Mahmoud Al Kayed (right), chairman of the board of directors of the Jordan Press Foundation Company Limited — publishers of the Jordan Times — and George Hawatmeh, chief editor of the Jordan Times, during a visit he paid to the newspaper on Tuesday. The Regent's visit to the Times was part of a tour he is making of newspapers in Jordan. He visited Al Ra'i on Monday and is expected to visit Al Dustour on Wednesday (Photo by Yusef Allan)

Guerrillas kill 9 in Algeria

PARIS (R) — Guerrillas attacked a bus on Monday night killing nine people in the southern Algerian town of Ksar Al Hirane, the Algerian security forces announced on Tuesday.

"Nine citizens have been assassinated in a cowardly way," they said in a statement carried by the official Algerian news agency AFS.

In a separate incident, one teenage student was killed on Monday when a young guerrilla hit a knot of pupils with a grenade at the exit of a secondary school in the

garrison town of Blida, 50 kilometres south of Algiers, the Algerian newspaper Liberte reported on Tuesday.

Another guerrilla threw a grenade over the wall of another secondary school in the same town, but no one was hurt, Liberte added. The

two grenade attacks occurred some minutes apart at noon as pupils left schools for lunch at home, it said.

The Algerian government blamed rebels for similar attacks against schools in which some 300 teachers and students were killed in the past three years.

More than 700 schools were destroyed in a sabotage campaign waged by guerrillas to try to cripple the Algerian economy. Algerian officials had said the sabotage campaign caused more than \$2.0 billion loss.

Security forces launched a manhunt to track down the attackers in Ksar Al Hirane in the province of Laghouat, 340 kilometres south of Algiers, they added in the statement.

The statement gave no details of the attack, the latest in a series of raids against buses or trains in Algeria in the last three years.

In August, a group of about 10 rebels, armed with shotguns, knives and hatchets forced a bus to stop at a fake roadblock they set at Sidi Laadja village, 300 kilometres south of Algiers.

They then picked 17 men aged between 17 and 25 and cut their throats, according to an Algerian report.

The Algerian authorities also blamed rebels for a series of bomb attacks against civilian targets like coffee shops and restaurants.

An estimated 50,000 people have been killed in Algeria's violence since early 1992 when the authorities cancelled a general election in which radicals had taken a huge lead.

Iran wants anti-U.S. oil ban

TEHRAN (AP) — Long-time rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran should join forces and impose an oil embargo on the United States to punish it for supporting Israel, a newspaper here urged Tuesday.

"The Persian Gulf countries should once again employ their oil as a weapon to bring the supporters of the Zionist regime to their senses," Iran's pro-government Tehran Times said.

Iran and Saudi Arabia are two of the most important countries in the Muslim World. But Iran and Saudi Arabia, a mostly Sunni Muslim state, have long battled for influence and rarely cooperate.

Rafsanjani rules out third presidential term for himself

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said Tuesday that he opposed amending the constitution to allow him to run for a third term in office.

"Changing the constitution for this purpose is not in the interest of the country," the official IRNA News Agency quoted the president as saying.

"There will eventually be a transition and it is better to conform with the basic law," he added in response to demands by his moderate supporters for a change in the constitution.

Mr. Rafsanjani's second four-year term in office expires in July 1997.

The head of state said there were "hundreds of distinguished personalities" in Iran who could replace him. "We have to clear the field for the rise of capable, honest and com-

petent figures," he said. Many moderate politicians mainly in Mr. Rafsanjani's administration have argued that his departure would be a "great loss" for the country.

But Islamic conservative rivals backed by the influential Shi'ite Muslim clergy have strongly opposed extending the president's tenure, and have

prized parliamentary speaker Ali Akbar Nateq Nuri for the post. Amid a bitter debate between the two factions, Iran's paramount leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei stepped in last month and ruled out a constitutional change in favour of Mr. Rafsanjani.

The president said he was committed to "promoting" Islam and the 1979 revolution and would in future "even accept such responsibilities as a provincial governor to help solve the people's problems."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Shenuda urges stand against Israel

CAIRO (AFP) — Pope Shenuda III of Egypt's Coptic Christians has said force is the only way to confront Israel, especially on the issue of Jerusalem's holy sites. "We must stand up to the Jews with adequate means. Condemnation is not enough, we must resort to force and unity," the Pope told Egyptian journalists at a meeting on Monday night. Pope Shenuda said his 1994 decision to ban Copts from making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem was aimed at "preventing any normalisation with Israel." The Arabs must "make haste to defend the (Christian and Muslim) holy sites," he said, referring to the Jewish state's opening of a Jerusalem tunnel near Al Aqsa Mosque. The tunnel sparked Israeli-Palestinian clashes last month in which more than 80 people were killed. Israel has long rejected demands from the Coptic church for the return of Al Sultan monastery in Jerusalem, which Israeli authorities handed over to the Ethiopian Orthodox church in 1967.

43 Kurd rebels killed in Turkey

ANKARA (R) — Turkish troops backed by helicopter gunships and fighter-bombers have killed 43 Kurd rebels in a central Turkish province over the last 10 days, a local official said on Tuesday. "Thirty-six terrorists were killed during the weekend's military operation and another seven before that," Sivas province deputy governor Mustafa Unlusoy told Reuters. On Saturday evening, troops backed by Cobra helicopters and F-16 jets launched attacks on Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) guerrillas in Sivas after four soldiers had been killed in an ambush. State-run Anatolian news agency said initially 15 rebels had been killed in the attacks. Sivas, which has a mostly ethnic Turk population, is not one of the 10 provinces where emergency rule is enforced. More than 20,000 people have been killed in the PKK's 12-year-old armed struggle for autonomy or independence in the southeast of the country.

Rights activist said held in Tunisia

PARIS (R) — The International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH) demanded on Tuesday the release of a leader of its Tunisian branch who it said was detained as he returned home after criticising his government at a Paris meeting. The Paris-based FIDH said Salah Zeghidi, the vice-president of the Tunisian league for the defence of human rights, was taken into custody at Tunis airport on Monday night. It said Mr. Zeghidi had voiced concern about human rights in Tunisia at a Paris meeting of major civil rights groups. Voicing concern that he could be mistreated, FIDH said the Tunisian government would be held responsible if Mr. Zeghidi was tortured or hurt. Tunisia has in the past reacted angrily to criticism of its human rights record. Five international human rights watchdog groups, including Amnesty International, accused Tunisia last month of widespread and worsening rights violations against political opponents and urged president Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali to take steps to prevent future abuses. They said some prominent human rights activists had been prevented from leaving the country while others had been arrested, questioned and threatened with prosecution. In May, the European Parliament also expressed concern over the harassment of political opponents and their families and the absence of press freedom in the country.

Sudanese, Palestinians call for jihad

KHARTOUM (AP) — Some 2,000 Sudanese and Palestinians marched in downtown Khartoum on Tuesday and called for holy war against Israel until the occupied Palestinian territories were freed. The march, sponsored by the National Congress, Sudan's government-controlled political party, brought together members of labour and student groups who chanted "jihad" and "Allahu Akbar." They gathered in front of parliament and were addressed by the deputy speaker and other parliament officials who echoed the Sudanese government's criticism of Israel. Deputy Speaker Abdul Aziz Shidoud called on "all Muslims to salvage Al Quds from the Israeli hegemony," Shaker Saraj, responsible for foreign relations at the parliament, told the crowd that the Muslims should unite "to erase the Zionist presence in Palestine." The marchers were protesting Israel's opening of a tunnel alongside Al Aqsa Mosque, the third holiest Islamic shrine.

Mauritania poll to test democracy

NOUAKCHOTT (R) — Mauritania votes for a new national assembly on Friday, with opposition candidates and women seeking seats there for the first time in an election that is a test of the country's fledgling democracy.

Opposition parties, which boycotted the first multi-party parliamentary poll in 1992 denouncing irregularities, have accused the authorities of denying them a fair hearing in state media during the campaign.

"What we have experienced during the campaign, that is the systematic censorship of our speeches and our interventions, augurs ill for these elections," Ahmad Ould Daddah, leader of the opposition Union of Democratic Forces, told French radio.

"If the ruling party was strong, effective, all it would have to do is organise transparent elections," Mr. Ould Daddah, runner-up in the 1992 presidential poll, said, denouncing a generalised corruption, falling purchasing power and rising unemployment. But the main influence on the poll could be the attitude of the electorate — many of whom failed to collect their voting cards by Sunday's deadline.

Mauritania, a former French colony, straddles black and Arab Africa. Dominant light-skinned Moors of Arab stock and blacks each make up a third of its 2.2 million people. Arabic-speaking ex-slaves make up the remain-

der. President Maouya Ould Sid'ahmad Taya, a French-trained army colonel, seized power in 1984. He launched a 1991 democratic transition and won a six-year term as president in 1992.

The pro-government Democratic and Social Republican Party, which won 67 seats of the national assembly's 76 seats in 1992, dismisses the opposition accusations of fraud. "The party has no need to resort to fraud," its secretary-general, ex-Prime Minister Sidi Mohamed Ould Boubacar told journalists on Monday. "If there is fraud it is necessary to look to those who are not sure of the result of the poll."

While many Mauritians are making the most of the party atmosphere, with brightly lit campaign tents animating the usually quiet capital at night, there is little sign of an eagerness to vote.

With just four days to go until polling day, election officials announced on Monday that voters had until Wednesday to collect their voting cards — after many voters failed to meet Sunday's deadline.

More than a million Mauritians have the right to vote. Thirteen political parties will contest Friday's poll along with 52 lists presented by independents — mostly disgruntled members of the ruling party bounced off the party ticket. Most of the 26 women candidates are from the ruling party.

Qadhafi calls Clinton a 'friend'

NICOSIA (AFP) — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi said Tuesday that he had nothing against U.S. President Bill Clinton, whom he called a "democratic friend."

"I don't hate him (Clinton), and his slate is clean. There's no reason to hate him. He's a democratic friend because he belongs to the democratic camp,"

Colonel Qadhafi told the Saudi-owned Middle East Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), in a broadcast seen in Nicosia.

"Clinton is a young president, his slate is clean concerning Libya. He has not participated in aggression against Libya, and I personally have nothing against him. He's a friend," Col. Qadhafi said.

The U.S. president is the Democratic Party candidate in the Nov. 5 general elections in the United States. His opponent is Republican Bob Dole.

Col. Qadhafi said he was throwing his support behind Mr. Clinton for the election. "We are for the Democratic Party, the party of minorities and oppressed people," the Libyan leader said.

Mr. Qadhafi said Mr. Clinton "got involved in Iraq, for example, because of the intelligence services' influence," Col. Qadhafi said he hated former U.S. President George Bush and that Bush's predecessor, former President Ronald Reagan, was "crazy."

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PROGRAMME TWO

14:05Muppet Show
14:30 The Bold and the Beautiful
15:00Pyramide
15:30French Programmes
16:00 Doc. — Earth Revealed
16:30Blizzard Island
17:00News Flash
17:15The Adventures
17:30Kelly
18:00French Programmes
19:30News Headlines
19:35Four Seasons
20:00Super Stars of Action
20:30Challenges
21:10NBA
22:00News in English
22:30Drama — Bugs
23:15Hart to Hart
23:59Comedy — Who is the Boss?

PRAYER TIMES

04:13Fajr
05:30(Sunrise) Duha
11:23Dhuhr
14:42Asr
17:16Maghreb
18:33Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swetfeth, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
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De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

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Anglican Church Tel. 652826

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St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Amman International Church Tel. 827126

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

Dr. Ahmad Qanu281484

Al Quds pharmacy(—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Walid Halaseh982799

Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192. 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade617101

Blood Bank775121

cent. Aqaba 45 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Jum'ah Abu Dhiab758848

Dr. Walid Al Masri675485

Dr. Ahmad Manna'839756

Dr. Youssef Rashid896301

Firas pharmacy661912

Ferdows pharmacy890280

Al Asama pharmacy637055

Al Salam pharmacy636730

Yacoub pharmacy644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

Nairokh pharmacy623672

Najib pharmacy847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ahmad Qanu281484

Al Quds pharmacy(—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Walid Halaseh982799

Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192. 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade617101

Blood Bank775121

Highway Police843402

Traffic Police896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints605800

Price Complaints661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints897467

Amman Municipality Complaints787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance)121

Overseas Calls010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television773111

Radio Jordan774111

Water Authority680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalidi Maternity, 644281/6

Aklieh Maternity, 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malhas, J. Amman636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 607071

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3

Al-Bashir,775111/26

Army, Marka891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50

Amal Hospital674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275

Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02)247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

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ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ)

Flights

07:00Damascus (RJ)

Wildlife reserve fires probably set by 'rebellious' elements

By Maria Bizri
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Director of the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) Anis Muasher said the series of deliberate fires at the Dana Wildlife Reserve are individual acts motivated by disregard for the laws of the reserve, and urged citizens as well as officials to participate in putting an end to the destruction.

A series of small fires have been set in and around the Dana Wildlife Reserve in what officials said are attempts to thwart the nature reserve project and frighten people involved in its management.

The Dana Wildlife Reserve, like the other six reserves protected by the RSCN, is protected by regulations which limit entry and access to many parts of the area under protection.

In an interview with the Jordan Times, Mr. Muasher said that in most cases, when certain restrictions are enforced upon a given society, some of its members rebel.

The fires, he said, are an example of that sort of rebellion.

Mr. Muasher said that although most of the citizens in the region of Dana support the project and are largely benefiting from it, it is always difficult to please everyone, especially because environmental laws and regulations are still new concepts that need to be absorbed by all members of the society.

Mr. Muasher said that he feels such acts are not organised, but rather are individual acts motivated by disregard for rules and regulations, an element that needs to be immediately addressed, he emphasised. He continued that the damage was not serious and that it was dealt with efficiently, yet the acts themselves are worrisome. He said an investigation is taking place and the government is looking seriously into the matter and further stated that the people of the Dana region are being helpful in the course of the investigation.

The Dana Wildlife Reserve project, Mr. Muasher said, has been supported

by numerous international organisations such as the World Bank, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Japanese government, as well as local organisations such as the Friends of Dana which raised a quarter of a million dinars to back the reserve.

The project, he continued, has rebuilt many houses, roads and mosques. It has also built a large research centre with a small hotel that caters to the needs of researchers and visitors to the reserve.

The Dana Wildlife Reserve, said Mr. Muasher, was acclaimed by the World Bank for being not only a conservation enterprise, but also one which enhances socio-economic development, especially since it has created almost 500 new jobs in the region.

Amman Khammash, who worked as a consultant for the RSCN as well as an architect, said he believes the fires are the work of small-minded individuals who cannot come to terms with the new rules of the reserve and who cannot understand the importance of environmental protection and view it as an alien Western idea.

Mr. Khammash added that probably some of these individuals are angry about their region being protected and regulated by people from outside and that they have to abide by certain rules in a manner to which they are not accustomed.

He stressed that these small fires do not have the capacity of ruining the reserve ecologically, rather they form a behavioural threat which demands urgent attention.

Agreeing with Mr. Muasher's comments, Mr. Khammash said the reserve is supported by most citizens of the region, and that these sporadic fires are probably the unconnected work of disgruntled individuals.

Chris Johnson, director of conservation at RSCN, said that when the project was first launched, people of the region where suspicious and resisted the change which they felt would affect their traditional way of life.

The major problems the project faced, said Mr. Johnson, were ones which stemmed from the new rules and

regulations the project enforced on grazing, hunting and other environmentally-damaging activities.

Gradually, however, he said, the local community became more positive, especially since they realised that they would actually benefit from the project.

In the past three years, there has been considerable change in the attitudes of people, in, as well as outside, the region; they have become more aware of the problems and more concerned in solving them, he added.

When the project was first launched, he explained, a study was done to examine the nature of the reserve and the results were impressive.

Over 600 different wild plants were found, and 500 animals, 24 of which classified as globally endangered, were registered, Mr. Johnson said.

Moreover, he said, the reserve was threatened by overgrazing, hunting, industrialisation, and wrongful planting of trees that are not part of the natural ecology of the area.

Because of these problems, Mr. Johnson said, we have to develop a proper working relationship not only with the local community but also with different organisations in order to enable us to perform in the best way possible.

Mr. Johnson continued that the latter has been achieved to a certain extent, and that the local community has managed to understand the issues at hand and to cooperate with the project management.

The fires, he added, are most probably the work of certain elements of the community who have not been able to come to terms with the new regulations, and have decided to show their frustration in such a manner.

Mr. Johnson continued that he does not believe they represent any specific sector of their community which to a large extent is supportive of the project, especially since it has created so many jobs and new opportunities for the local community.

Hair samples to be analysed in 'Udwan Mills' case

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Amman Criminal Court Tuesday stated it was subjecting hair samples to analysis in the retrial of nine people, five of whom had been sentenced to death in 1995.

The nine defendants were part of a group of 12, known as "Udwan Mills", who received prison sentences ranging from 10 years to the death penalty for committing a total of 230 crimes, including murder, attempted murder, armed robbery, theft, kidnapping and fraud.

Two of the murder victims were security officers.

The Criminal Court's decision Tuesday followed a request from the

Court of Cassation, which had studied the case and asked the Criminal Court to revise its rulings.

"The court requested that the criminal lab examine hair samples, found in the hands of victim Emile Khashram, to determine whether or not the hair belongs to defendants Imad and Yousef [Ayed Smadi]," Judge Abdul Rahman Tawfiq said.

The two men, along with Khader Jaber Mubarak, were accused of robbing and killing Mr. Khashram, 70, in his Shmeisani home on Nov. 22, 1992.

According to the court, the three monitored the victim's house for one week and resolved to rob the house, thinking that the owner was out. But such was not the case and

Mr. Khashram, according to sworn testimony, started begging for his life and telling the perpetrators to take what they wanted but not to kill him.

"The three men did not listen to his pleas and struck him several times on the head with an iron bar and a small table. They then left after establishing with certainty that he was dead," the court said in the verdict.

The Court of Cassation had been reviewing the case since June 30, 1995 and returned the case to the Criminal Court asking for a revision of the outcome as "it was based on confession rather than a study of relevant evidence."

In its June 1995 ruling, the Criminal Court said it based its decision on

defendant confessions in front of the State Security and Criminal Court prosecution.

The higher court argued that the Criminal Court erred in basing its ruling merely upon defendant confessions "as the defendants claimed they were interrogated and forced to confess."

The group was nicknamed "Udwan Mills" because they were captured in a police raid in the Udwan Village in Sukhneh, north of Zarqa.

For the past three years, the court heard more than 160 witnesses in one of the longest cases to be tried in the Kingdom.

The court tribunal postponed the case until Oct. 26 to await criminal lab results.

Vendors complain of inspector harassment

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Street vendors and shopowners in the Hussein refugee camp this week complained of having been repeatedly harassed by inspectors working for the Greater Amman Municipality and the Ministry of Supply.

But officials from the two departments categorically denied the charges and further urged citizens to report any misconduct on the part of the inspectors.

A shopowner on Ein Jaloud Street, in the refugee camp, claimed that the municipality and ministry inspectors continually harass him and search for minor "infractions" for which they can issue a warning or fine.

"This is the first time that we witness such harassment by employees of the municipality and Ministry of Supply. [It seems] as if officials are determined to collect money in any way possible," Abu Bassam

told the Jordan Times.

A grocery shop owner on street no. 20 also complained of inspectors' capriciousness upon inspection rounds.

"Once, we forgot to place the price tag on one of our items and the inspector said [that] although prices look reasonable I feel like issuing you a penalty," the shopowner said.

Director of the Public Relations Department for the Greater Amman Municipality Sa'eed Ghamoh stressed that employees are merely fulfilling job obligations in applying municipal law.

"Normally, the municipality inspectors politely ask the violators to abide by regulations, but in certain cases they have to be strict, especially in the case of repeat offenders," he said.

But residents of the refugee camps insist that the inspectors are intentionally provoking merchants and street vendors.

Their accusations come less than a week after a

municipality inspector was allegedly attacked by street vendors while on duty.

Witnesses present during last Friday's incident said that the inspector, Jamil Abu Shish began to kick stalls.

According to these witnesses, the two young owners of the stand pushed the inspector, whose head bumped against a ladder causing abrasions.

The inspector, Mr. Abu Shish, Tuesday told the Jordan Times that he was attacked by the youths.

"I asked them politely to move their stand and they agreed. But a few seconds later one of them struck me with a metal bar," he said.

Director of Public Relations at the Ministry of Supply Ahmad Theban said that the ministry's inspectors are not perfect.

"We have people who perform their duties properly, and others who make mistakes," Mr. Theban said.

But in general, he said, the ministry issues strict instructions to the inspec-

tors to respect and cooperate with merchants.

"The inspectors' job at the ministry is to point out mistakes, to the offenders, but if they keep repeating the same mistakes then we have to fine them," he explained.

Last week, ministry inspectors claimed to have been attacked by a butcher who was slaughtering animals, in his shop, in violation of the Supply Law.

According to a statement released by the ministry, he was violating health regulations.

The statement also charged that he was selling mutton without official municipality slaughterhouse stamps.

Officials stressed that strict measures are taken against any inspector who abuses his authority.

They said inspectors who are guilty of such abuses are either issued a warning, receive a salary deduction or, in extreme cases, risk losing their jobs.

Minister seeks assistance from Australia and the EU

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Agriculture Mustafa Shneikat is seeking assistance from Australia and the European Union (EU) for the implementation of a project regarding highland development over the next five years.

In a meeting with Australian Ambassador to Jordan Marilyn Wickes, the minister reviewed a draft document for the project which his ministry has already submitted to the World Food Programme, an agency which falls under the auspices of the United Nations.

The project is designed to increase agricultural production, reduce soil erosion and increase cultivation of fruit trees mainly olive.

It also includes sugges-

tions of projects to aid small farmers better cultivate their lands and breed livestock.

Dr. Shneikat told the ambassador that Jordan looks for the Australian government's support for this programme.

The WFP Executive Council is due to convene in Rome later this month to discuss these issues.

Dr. Shneikat and the ambassador also discussed issues pertinent to agriculture and the prospect of training Jordanians interested in veterinary sciences in Australia.

Ms. Wickes promised to relay Jordanian views to Australia's representative at the WFP.

Also Tuesday Dr. Shneikat held a meeting

with the EU representative in Jordan, Yves Gazzo and the two reviewed Jordan's draft document requesting assistance from the WFP.

Mr. Gazzo promised full EU support at the WFP Executive Council meeting.

They also discussed prospects for EU support for the future highland project.

Mr. Gazzo said that there was a good possibility that the EU will finance Jordanian development projects once they prove their feasibility.

The WFP has, since 1964, provided assistance to the Kingdom in endeavours to develop highlands and increase agricultural production.

Jordan celebrates Arab Habitat Day

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan Monday marked Arab Habitat Day, which is annually celebrated on the first Monday in October.

To mark the occasion, the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDC) held a major celebration under the theme "Housing Involves Participation and Balanced Development."

Addressing the ceremony, HUDC Director General Yousef Hiyasat stated that the celebration is an opportunity for reevaluation of the housing development evolution.

Dr. Hiyasat reviewed his corporation's housing policy stating its aim as the sheltering of the entire population.

Jordan's celebration of Arab Habitat Day coincided with the world celebration of World Habitat Day, celebrated on Monday under the theme: "Urbanisation, Citizenship and Human Solidarity."

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements Assistant Secretary General Dr. Wally N'Dow sent a message to the event saying, "Nearly half of humanity will live in urban centres by the year 2025."

He added: "Making our task even more urgent is the unprecedented rate at which our cities are growing. Already at the centre of today's environmental and social drama, cities are in large part not prepared for the human ills of our age — poverty, crime, drugs, disaffected youth, polluted air and water, paralyzing traffic, decaying infrastructures, dehumanising slums and shanty towns."

Pharmaceutical industry debates impact of intellectual property rights

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Health Aref Bataineh, along with U.S. Ambassador to Jordan Wesley Egan, Tuesday discussed Jordan's application of intellectual property rights and the impact of such on the pharmaceutical industry.

The discussion covered prospects of giving Jordan a grace period to adjust to international agreement requirements regarding intellectual property rights and U.S. technical assistance to help Jordan promote its pharmaceutical industry.

The meeting, held at the minister's office, was attended by Chairman of the Jordanian Federation of Drug Producers Anis Muasher as well as senior ministry officials.

The meeting coincided with a workshop at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) entitled: The Pharmaceutical Industry of the Arab World, which covered

issues related to joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Ministry of Health Secretary General Hashem Jaddou addressed the meeting, on behalf of Dr. Bataineh, and emphasised that the Arab pharmaceutical industry has attained a professional level matching its counterparts in advanced nations.

The workshop is designed to help participating Arab firms coordinate their stand regarding WTO requirements as well as discuss potential advantages for the Arab industry in joining this organisation, said Dr. Jaddou.

JUST President Saad Hijazi opined that Arab states are bound to join the WTO in order to benefit from free trade and new world markets.

He called for the creation of regional cooperation in pharmaceutical research to ensure continued success.

According to Dean of the Pharmacy Faculty at JUST

Mutaz Salem, consumption of medicine in the Arab world reached \$785 million in 1975 and rose to nearly \$3.8 billion in 1994 and that local pharmaceutical production in the Arab World covers only 45 per cent of its demand.

He said that the pharmaceutical industry of the Arab world can be developed once an Arab common market has been created which, in turn, will encourage research and product quality improvement.

The two-day meeting is being attended by representatives of various Arab pharmaceutical firms and will discuss topics connected with the WTO requirements, topics related to intellectual property rights and the status of the Arab drug industries.

The meeting was organised in conjunction with the Amman-based Arab Company for Drug Industries and Medical Appliances.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

* "Black Adder the Third" at the British Council at 7:00 p.m.

CONCERT

* Performance by Al Hasounah Band at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

SEMINARS AND LECTURES

* "Protection of Publication and Production Rights in the Arab World" with the participation of Ibrahim Al Mu'allim, Osama Miquadi, and Fathi Al Bis at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

* Lecture on "The Business of Publishing" hosted by the Amman Rotary Cosmopolitan Club at the Marriott Hotel at 1:30 p.m.

* Roundtable discussion entitled "From Pen to Paper" at the Jordan Writers Federation at 6:00 p.m.

FOOD FAIR

* The 13th Annual Food Fair at the International Community School on Friday Oct. 11 at 11:00 a.m. (Tel. 841070) — Activities include national costume parade, music by the Jordanian Army Band, food from different parts of the world including Swedish specialties, Jordanian delicacies, Irish coffee, and Italian parts. Pony rides and other activities.

EXHIBITIONS

* "Amman Sixth International Book Exhibition" at the International Exhibition Centre, University Rd., until Oct. 17.

* "The Fifth One-Dimension Exhibition" by several artists at Ab'ad Art Gallery, Mecca Street (Tel. 862105), until Oct. 10.

* Basketry exhibition (with a variety of wrought iron furniture mixed with basketry) at Jordan Design and Trade Centre, Shmeisani (Tel. 699141/2), until Oct. 10.

Clinton wins corporate nod, campaigns in New England

MANCHESTER, N.H. (R) — President Bill Clinton Monday courted Republican Bob Dole's core constituencies, accepting an endorsement from about 2,500 businesspeople and campaigning in conservative New Hampshire state.

One day after debating Sen. Dole, Mr. Clinton sought to rebut charges he has mismanaged the economy by appearing with top businessmen, including the chief executives of Sprint, Xerox and United Technologies, all of whom praised his policies.

The Clinton/Gore campaign said the men were among more than 2,500 "business leaders" who had decided to endorse the president and argued that their support vindicated Mr. Clinton's management of the economy.

The endorsement was unusual in U.S. politics, where industry has typically sided with the Republicans rather than the Democrats.

But many executives on the list have long supported Mr. Clinton while others, like Tom Horan of Connecticut's Horan Florists and William Torbert, Delaware's Torbert Funeral Chapel, did not appear to be titans of the business world.

While accepting their endorsement, Mr. Clinton asked the business leaders for more, saying he needed their help to make the recently enacted welfare reform law work.

"Only the private sector in America can prove that I

was right to sign that bill, and those who thought I was wrong were wrong," he said. "The government cannot hire all these people ... This has basically got to be a private sector show."

Mr. Clinton, and his aides, used the endorsements to argue that Sen. Dole's natural allies were deserting him only four weeks from the Nov. 5 election. National opinion polls show Mr. Clinton leads Sen. Dole by 10 to 20 percentage points.

"There is a problem developing in their ranks ... about traditional sources of Republican support drying up," said White House spokesman Mike McCurry. "Having such a show of support for the president ... has got to be a little dispiriting for them."

White House political director Doug Sosnik made a similar argument for the president's afternoon stop in Manchester, New Hampshire, saying the state had swung to Mr. Clinton and citing polls showing him leading Sen. Dole by 15 to 23 points.

Mr. Clinton won the state in 1992, but in a demonstration of its conservative roots, did so by a margin of only 6,500 votes.

The president was unimpeachably delighted to be in New Hampshire, the scene of his remarkable comeback during the 1992 primary campaign.

At a boisterous outdoor rally at a sports stadium in Manchester, Mr. Clinton reminded the crowd of sev-

eral thousand that he had first declared his candidacy for president five years ago to the day in New Hampshire.

"There may be someone in America right now who's happier than I am but I have no idea who it would be. I am glad to be here," Mr. Clinton said.

A scoreboard at the stadium, referring to Sunday night's debate against Sen. Dole in Hartford, Connecticut, showed Mr. Clinton beating his opponent 1-0.

Mr. Clinton appeared pleased with the debate, which will be followed by a second encounter in San Diego on Oct. 16.

"I enjoyed that debate and I believe that the American people got a pretty good feel for the differences between us," Mr. Clinton said. "We just proved you can still do it and be civilized and decent and humane."

At the end of a long day, Mr. Clinton flew to Portland, Maine, for a nighttime rally of 15,000 exuberant people at a baseball stadium filled to capacity.

Although Mr. Clinton was clearly cultivating Maine voters for his re-election, the rally also featured Joseph Brennan, a former Democratic state governor running for the Senate, and Tom Allen, a contemporary of Mr. Clinton's at Oxford University running for Congress.

Mr. Clinton was scheduled to return to Washington early Tuesday.

Sen. Dole closed the gap with President Clinton to about 9 percentage points in the latest Reuters daily tracking poll Monday, a leap from 15 points behind in the previous survey.

The poll — completed before the first presidential debate Sunday night in Hartford, Connecticut — was conducted for Reuters by John Zogby Group International and had Mr. Clinton at 44.4 per cent, Sen. Dole, 35.1 per cent and Reform Party candidate Ross Perot, 5.8 per cent. Undecided voters made up 13 per cent.

This poll was a rolling three day average of polling results from Friday through Sunday. The Reuters/Zogby poll of approximately 900 likely voters had a margin of error of plus or minus 3.3 percentage points.

"I'm calling this the October adjustment we've all been expecting," pollster John Zogby said, noting there was no single event that caused the race to tighten.

Sen. Dole is solidifying his Republican base and "is now getting three out of four Republican voters," Mr. Zogby said.

Earlier Sen. Dole could count on only about 62 to 64 per cent of Republicans surveyed, Mr. Zogby said.

"One could anticipate there will be a little more tightening as he brings in more Republicans," Mr. Zogby said.

Japan kicks off campaign for Oct. 20 election

TOKYO (R) — Politicians visited rain-soaked constituencies across Japan Tuesday, formally launching a 12-day campaign for the votes of an electorate which has only half made up its mind who to support.

Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, his own job riding on his Liberal Democratic Party's success in the Oct. 20 general elections, told a crowd in eastern Tokyo that only the LDP could jumpstart Japan's economy and ease unemployment fears.

"Trust the LDP, and we will immediately get to work" deregulating the economy and streamlining the bureaucracy, Mr. Hashimoto said from atop a White Party van as several hundred onlookers peered through umbrellas to see him.

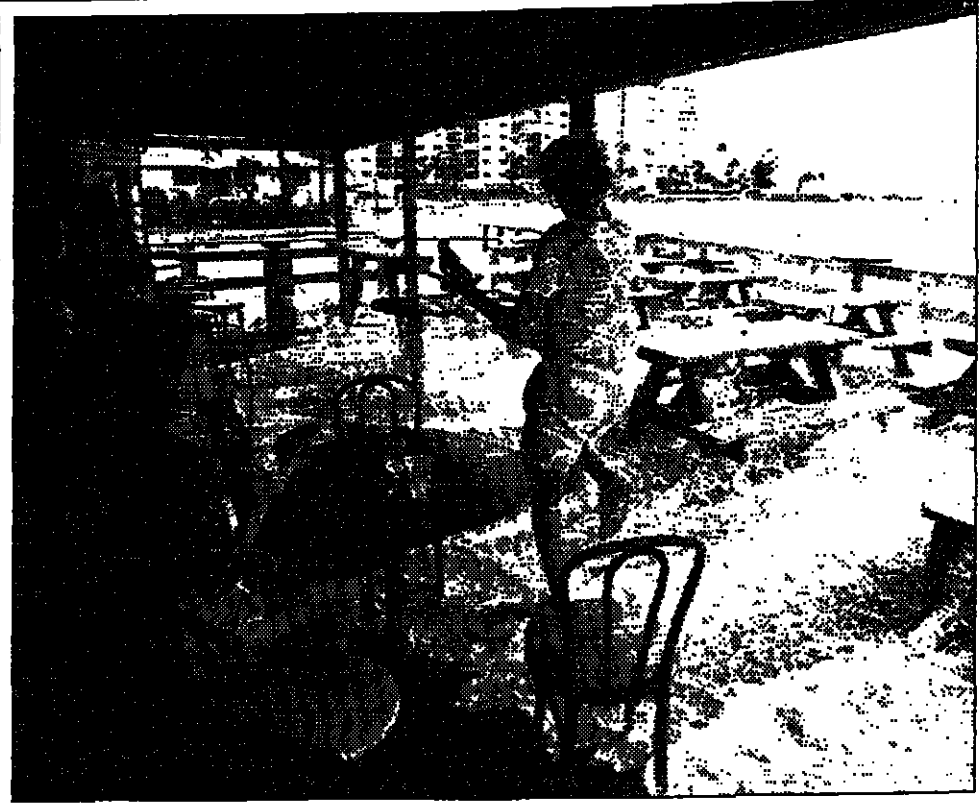
Calls to cut back the bureaucracy, blamed for a series of scandals in health and financial administration, are central to the campaign pledges of all major parties, making it hard for Japan's 98 million voters to choose.

About half of voters polled by major newspapers say they are undecided. Only 52 per cent of 3,000 voters polled at the weekend by the mass-circulation daily newspaper Yomiuri Shimbun said they would definitely vote.

Mr. Hashimoto, Japan's fourth prime minister since the last elections in 1993 broke the LDP's 38-year grip on power, also pledged to improve the welfare programme for senior citizens, whose meteoric growth carries ominous budget implications.

"We have a responsibility to do our utmost to create a society where living a long time is a good thing," he said.

Across the capital, Shinshinto (New Frontier Party) leader Ichiro Ozawa, Mr. Hashimoto's main rival, peddled a "contract with Japan" platform of supply-side tax cuts and deregulation that appeared to borrow heavily from U.S. Republicans.



A customer scampers away from a surge of sea water flooding over a seaside restaurant's deck as Tropical Storm Josephine makes its way through St. Petersburg, Florida, Monday. The storm kicked up high surf as it rolled across the Gulf of Mexico into Florida's west coast (Reuter photo)

Storm batters northern Florida

MIAMI, Florida (AFP) — Tropical storm Josephine made landfall in northwestern Florida late Monday with 112-kilometre an hour winds, drenching rain and tornados, sending local residents scurrying for safety.

Hundreds of people fled their homes earlier in the day in northern Florida in anticipation of Josephine's arrival, as Governor Lawton Chiles ordered universities, schools and state offices in the Florida panhandle to close early.

The near-hurricane strength storm sent ocean swells of more than two metres flooding coastal areas near Apalachicola.

Boats were hauled from marinas and windows taped and shuttered to minimize the damage from the storm.

Local authorities were concerned by inland tornados, tidal surges and up to 12.5 centimeters of rain being dumped on an already drenched northern Florida.

"It's all saturated," said Mayor John Delaney of Jacksonville.

"It's like having a glass of water and pouring more in

there. It's going to spill out."

The mayor declared a state of emergency Monday afternoon, opening up shelters and gathering police, fire fighters and utility repair crews.

Jacksonville has already endured 18 centimeters of rain since last week, with swollen ground water levels throughout the region. Floods were already covering parts of north Florida and flood warnings spread across the region.

"With seven days of rain, the ground has absorbed all it can take. And we're still getting rain," said Duval County fire rescue operations Chief Ted Holmes.

Local television stations around the state capital of Tallahassee showed neighbourhoods already flooded by heavy rains that have struck the area since Saturday.

Several dozen tornados touched down in north and central Florida, including one some 50 kilometres south of the Kennedy Space Center, although no major damage was reported, officials said.

Hurricane warnings were in effect from Anclote Keys — just north of Tampa Bay — to Apalachicola, and tropical storm warnings were in effect as far south as Venice, forecasters said.

Areas threatened by the storm include the populous Tampa Bay area, including St. Petersburg, where a debate between Vice President Al Gore and republican candidate Jack Kemp is scheduled for Wednesday.

Meteorologists, however, found relief in observing Josephine moving inland at some 37 kilometers per hour.

"That's good," said weather forecaster Steve Lyons of the National Hurricane Centre in Miami. "We want it to move quickly so it won't drop a lot more rain."

"Josephine is going to stack up as the major weather event of the past three years," said Tom Deegan, a television forecaster.

"All of the rivers in the area ... are all going to be flooding."



Thirteen-year-old Shawn Robinson of St. Petersburg has a front row seat as a huge wave surges over a sea wall from Tropical Storm Josephine (Reuter photo)

Hundreds of Khmer Rouge defect to join Cambodian army

BATTAMBANG, Cambodia (R) — Hundreds of hardline Khmer Rouge guerrillas have agreed to join Cambodian government forces in another blow to the weakening Maoist Faction led by Pol Pot, a top defence official said Tuesday.

At least five divisions of the hardline guerrillas decided unconditionally to merge with government forces on Oct. 4, he said.

Analysts said their decision to defect straight to the government would put pressure on former top Khmer Rouge cadre Ieng Sary to speed up the process of reconciling his forces with Phnom Penh.

The government is still negotiating a military merger with commanders loyal to Ieng Sary, with arguments focusing on military and police posts for the dissident guerrillas and government access to areas under their control.

"Now all the brothers and

sisters come to join the government because they want to end the war and find peace for their families," General Preap Tan, deputy commander of regional forces, told reporters.

"This is another government success," he added.

The divisions were from areas close to Samlaut, a key Khmer Rouge base 80 km southwest of Battambang seized last week by dissident forces loyal to Ieng Sary.

Commanders of three of the divisions flew from the jungles Tuesday to Battambang, the country's second largest city, to be formally inducted into the armed forces, guerrilla and armed forces officials said.

Mr. Ieng Sary, foreign minister during the brutal 1975-1979 Khmer Rouge regime, broke with hardliners loyal to Pol Pot in August and forged a ceasefire with the government.

Merger talks began after Ieng Sary received a royal

pardon on Sept. 14 from a death sentence for his role in the genocide of more than one million Cambodians during the Khmer Rouge's rule.

Chum Koeun, hardline commander of Division 36, said he was bringing almost 300 fighters and 1,000 dependants to the government side.

"We are bringing a lot of weapons and ammunition," he said, adding that the guerrillas lacked food and medicine.

Soldiers at Battambang Airport were seen loading a helicopter with supplies to be taken to the rebel bases.

Commanders of Divisions 919 and 695 said they were bringing 250 and 300 guerrillas, respectively, and hundreds of dependants.

Numbers from the final two divisions were not immediately known.

General Keo Pong, who defected from the Khmer Rouge earlier this year, said the reconciliation had been peaceful.

Indonesian gives birth to quintuplets

JAKARTA (AFP) — An Indonesian woman has given birth to quintuplets, two boys and three girls, at a private hospital in West Java, a newspaper reported Tuesday. The babies, delivered in an operation at 31 weeks gestation, weighed around 1,400 grammes (49 ounces) and measured 37 to 38.5 centimetres (14.8 to 15.4 inches). The seven doctors at the birth said the quintuplets were healthy, the Kompas newspaper said, adding that the birth at Boromeus Hospital in Bandung was conducted under spinal anesthesia. Twenty-six-year-old Ely-dawaty declined full anesthesia saying she wanted to experience the birth, the daily quoted one of the doctors as saying. The babies are currently in the hospital's neo-natal intensive care unit.

No toilet flushes tourists from Ireland's Blarney

DUBLIN (R) — Blarney, home of the legendary stone which gives those who kiss it the power of eloquence, is demanding a public toilet. Local authorities say the lack of one is turning away tourists, the lifeblood of the economy of the southern Irish village. Its long-serving public toilet was removed by Cork County Council which felt it was an eyesore, and the local council says it needs a new one for the comfort of visitors and locals. The stone, which gives its name to Blarney, or the ability to talk a great deal without saying much, has itself been under attack recently. Local authorities say that youths fired with beer have been urinating on it and are taking steps to increase security at the site.

Titanic to be resurrected as a musical

NEW YORK (R) — Given the peculiar nature of mounting a Broadway musical these days, it might be tempting fate to announce a new show called Titanic. Yet veterans from Broadway and London's West End are already on board the project due in the spring of 1997, producers announced recently. Peter Stone, who was scored in the past with 1776, Woman Of The Year and The Will Rogers Follies — Tony winners all — will write the book while music and lyrics will come from Maury Yeston of Nine and Grand Hotel fame. The heart of the show will revolve around six main characters including the owner of the Titanic, the British liner that sank in 1912 after hitting an iceberg in the North Atlantic killing more than 1,500 people.

Thirsty elephants wreck illegal breweries

CALCUTTA, India (R) — A herd of thirsty elephants in search of a drink destroyed several illegal breweries southwest of Calcutta, Indian forest officials said Tuesday. The 45-strong herd charged out of the hills in search of water but dropped into the illegal breweries instead, the officials in India's West Bengal state said. "The elephants destroyed six illegal breweries in two days," said Mahendra Pande, a district forest officer. "They are notoriously famous for their fondness towards liquor and are great guzzlers." The incident occurred over the weekend in Midnapore district 100 kilometres southwest of Calcutta.



Russian Security Chief Alexander Lebed (left) talks with Western European Union (WEU) Secretary General Jose Cutileiro during a meeting at the WEU Headquarters in Brussels. Gen. Lebed dismissed as insignificant criticisms by Russia's Interior Minister Anatoly Kulikov of his peace deal in Chechnya (Reuter photo)

Lebed visits NATO's European troop HQ

MONS, Belgium (AFP) — Russia's national security chief Alexander Lebed toured NATO's military nerve centre here Tuesday, a day after sparking consternation by linking the START-II nuclear reduction accord to a halt in the alliance's expansion plans.

Gen. Lebed was welcomed to the troop headquarters in the southwestern city of Mons by the supreme commander of NATO allied forces in Europe, U.S. General George Joulwan.

The two men, Gen. Lebed looking dour and moving stiffly, reviewed troops from the 16 alliance member state before retiring to Gen. Joulwan's office for talks.

Earlier in the day in Brussels, Gen. Lebed visited the headquarters of the Western European Union (WEU), the only all-European body charged with defence issues.

He went on to meet Belgian members of parliament before holding 30 minutes of talks with Belgian Defence Minister Jean-

Pol Poncelet.

Gen. Lebed arrived in Belgium Sunday to visit NATO's main headquarters at the invitation of Secretary-General Javier Solana.

After talks with Mr. Solana Monday, Gen. Lebed called for a delay in NATO plans to expand to take in Eastern European nations, which Russia sees as a threat to its security.

He warned that Russia might not ratify the START-II accord, which would reduce U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear arsenals by two-thirds and eliminate land-based multiple warheads, if enlargement goes ahead.

Russia wants an agreement with NATO on its own relations with the alliance before NATO embraces ex-Warsaw Pact members. However Mr. Solana Monday flatly rejected the proposal.

Following his meeting with Mr. Poncelet, Gen. Lebed said that he believed the issue would be dealt with in a "civilised" manner.

Pope has appendix removed

ROME (R) — Pope John Paul had a two-hour operation Tuesday to remove his appendix, hospital sources said, and Italian news agencies said the surgery was performed without a hitch.

A reporter saw the 76-year-old Pope, attached to a drip, being wheeled on a bed back to his special 10th floor suite of Rome's Gemelli Hospital surrounded by doctors and guards after emerging from the operating theatre on the floor below.

He had appeared relaxed and smiled at security officers and nurses he passed on his way into the operating theatre shortly after 7

a.m. (0500 GMT) following prayers in the chapel of his suite, a member of his entourage said.

Barring complications, the Pope is expected to stay in hospital for about five days prior to convalescence.

The ANSA news agency, quoting hospital sources, said the operation, conducted by the same surgeon who saved the Pope's life after he was shot in 1981, ended shortly before 9.00 a.m.

It said the Pope had awoken from anaesthetic at around 9.10 a.m. And that the operation had been "carried out without complications." The AGI news agency carried a similar report.

Neither dispatch could immediately be confirmed. An official medical bulletin was expected to be issued at around 11 a.m. (0900 GMT).

The Vatican announced plans for the operation last month when it said recurrent inflammation of the appendix was the cause of three bouts of "intestinal fever" the Pope has suffered since last Christmas.

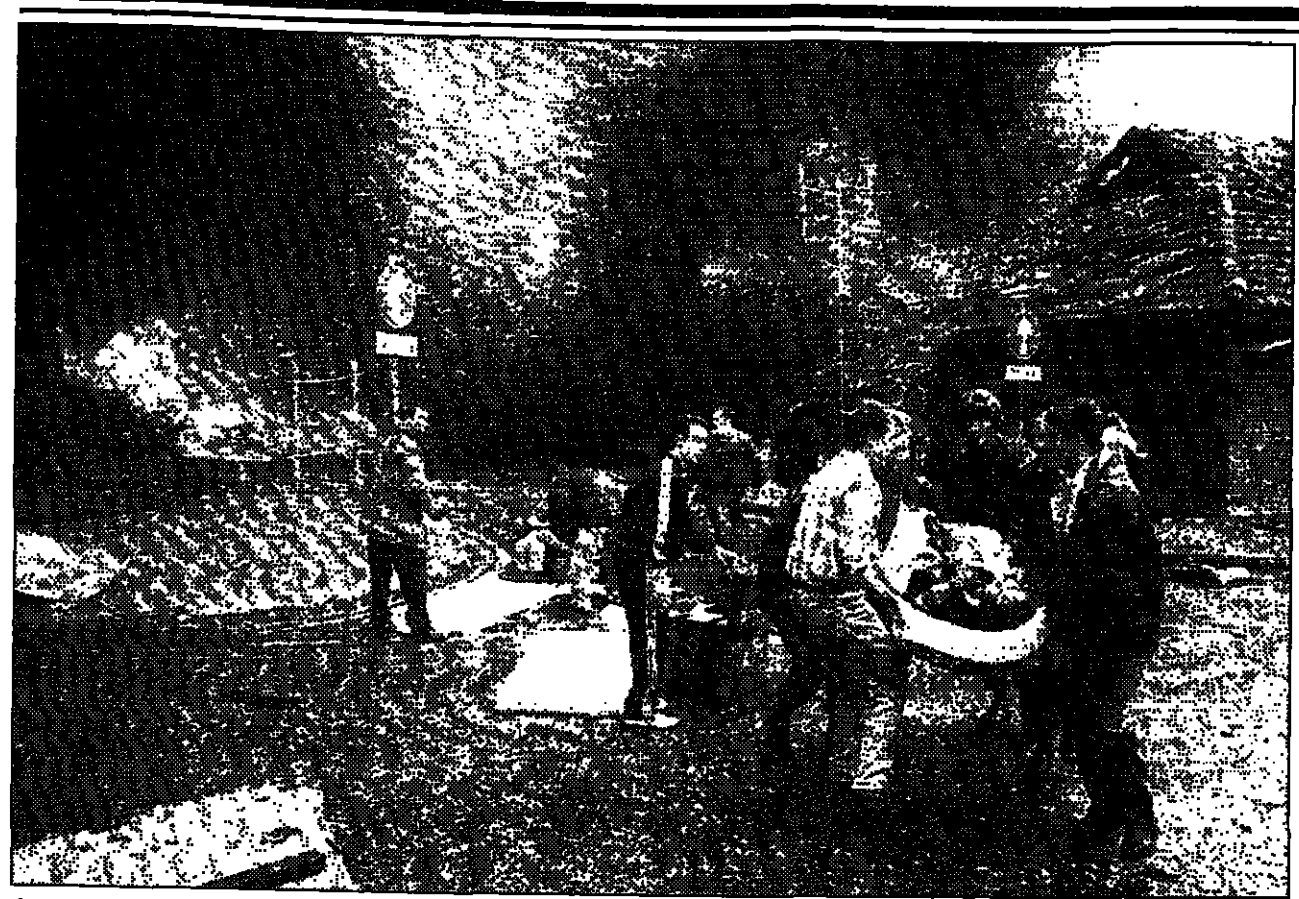
The announcement has failed to quell intense speculation that the Polish-born Pope may be suffering from a new tumour, a theory dismissed by the Vatican as "medical fiction" when the Pope entered the Gemelli Sunday.

Indonesian gives birth to quintuplets

JAKARTA (AP) — An Indonesian woman gave birth to quintuplets Tuesday. The babies were born at a private hospital in Jakarta. The mother, who is 25 years old, was in good health. The babies are all girls and weigh about 1.4 kilograms each. They are expected to survive.

No toilet for tourists in Ireland's

TIERRA RESURGE



British soldiers help the injured at the Theipval British Army Headquarters, Lisburn, following two bomb explosions Monday. No bomb warning had been given before the blasts in which up to 20 people were injured (Reuter photo)

British Conservatives open key pre-election conference

BOURNEMOUTH, England (R) — Britain's ruling Conservatives began a crucial pre-election conference Tuesday lagging in opinion polls, at loggerheads over Europe and demoralised by allegations of political sleaze.

Party Chairman Brian Mawhinney tried to boost confidence by declaring: "This is a party that is on its way to winning the next election."

But as delegates filed into the conference centre in the resort of Bournemouth, the newspapers they carried were filled with gloom for the party.

And the conference was overshadowed by Monday's suspected Irish Republican car bomb attacks on Northern Ireland's Army headquarters in which 31 people were injured, threatening the already fragile peace process in which Prime Minister John Major had invested so much political capital.

The Guardian newspaper carried a poll that put the Conservatives 18 points behind the opposition Labour Party with at most eight months go to a general election.

In the Times, John Redwood, the right-winger who last year challenged Major for the party leadership, criticised Mr. Major's wait-and-see policy towards a planned single European currency.

"If in a meeting there is a heated argument going on, you will not be heard if you occasionally murmur that you have not yet made up your mind," he said.

The article confirmed the gap between Mr. Redwood and Mr. Major, apparent

Diana unfazed by video tapes of her cavorting with lover

LONDON (AFP) — The Princess of Wales made another dazzling public appearance Tuesday as controversy raged around the origins of a shock video purportedly showing her cavorting in her underwear with former lover James Hewitt.

Appearing at an AIDS benefit, the ex-wife of the Prince of Wales gave no recognition of the stir caused by the 80-second black and white video, shot through a window at high-grove, her former husband's country home in western England.

But there were sinister suggestions about who shot the clandestine tape, and how it came into the hands of the tabloid newspaper, the Sun, which ran it for television airing.

One theory said it had been the work of rogue MI5 intelligence agents, or even a crack SAS army team, spying on Prince Charles, when she had a long affair with Hewitt.

She acknowledged the affair in a television interview after Hewitt allowed details to be published in a best-selling book.

The video — said by The Sun to have been stored in a bank vault in the United States — was offered to the paper during a clandestine meeting last Friday in west London, a spokesman for the mass-circulation tabloid said.

A U.S. lawyer who reportedly handed over the video told The Sun he was acting on behalf of a group of soldiers or bodyguards led by a man known only as "the sergeant."

The lawyer claimed that the video would have been used against the princess if she had "cut up rough" during her recent divorce negotiations with Prince Charles, the tabloid added.

Princess Diana has claimed that in the final years of her marriage, her phone was tapped, listening devices were installed in her private apartments and her mail was intercepted.

Buckingham Palace Monday rejected suggestions that the film could have been used to blackmail Princess Diana.

Tory MP Harry Greenwood said he would call for an inquiry into the origins of the tape.

"Without in any way judging the princess' life, which is private, there ought to be an inquiry into how this happened and who authorised it," said Mr. Greenwood.

"If this had been the work of the paparazzi, then this video would not have been gathering dust for five years in some bank vault," he said. "That suggests something more sinister."

China accuses Japan of irresponsibility over islands

BEIJING (R) — China Tuesday accused Japan of taking an irresponsible approach to a bitter sovereignty dispute over a group of uninhabited East China Sea islands, saying Tokyo must take action to avoid further damaging ties.

A festering row over the islands, known in China as the Diaoyu and in Japan as the Senkakus, has flared in recent months after Japanese rightwingers moved to buttress Tokyo's claim by building a lighthouse on one of the group.

"The Japanese government has taken very irresponsible actions, particularly by encouraging illegal landings on the Diaoyu islands by rightwing groups, hurting Sino-Japanese relations," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Shen Guofang said.

Tokyo should take action to prevent further damage to ties, Mr. Shen told a news briefing in Beijing.

Tension over the potentially resource-rich islands soared Monday when Hong Kong and Taiwan activists pierced a Japanese cordon and planted Chinese and Taiwan flags on one of the islets, claimed by Tokyo and by both Beijing and its arch-rival Taipei.

The brief landings by a handful of the around 300 Hong Kong and Taiwan protesters aboard a 50-foot flotilla were the first time activists had managed to break Japan's maritime blockade.

An earlier attempt ended in failure when Hong Kong activist David Chan drowned after leaping into stormy waters to protest Tokyo's control of the group.

A Japanese coast-guard medical team failed to revive Chan but saved the life of a fellow protester.

Japan has lamented what it calls the illegal landings and has not ruled out arresting future landing parties. A foreign ministry spokesman said Tuesday that Tokyo had asked China and Taiwan to prevent further attempts to land on the islands.

Chinese spokesman Shen said Japan was responsible for the revival of the row over ownership of the islands, which Beijing says it has claimed for centuries.

Tokyo's claim dates to 1895 when it defeated imperial China in a war and seized control of a number of Chinese territories.

"The Japanese government didn't take any action to stop the damaging of Sino-Japanese ties by rightwing groups who offended against Chinese sovereignty," Mr. Shen said. "This has aroused the strong anger of the Chinese people."

"The will of the people cannot be bullied," he said.

Gains by Japanese rightwing forces would force victims of past Japanese aggression in Asia to question the future role Tokyo would play in the region, he said.

Outrage over the Japanese rightwingers' construction of the makeshift lighthouse on the islands has united nationalist sentiment in China, political rival Taiwan and the British colony of Hong Kong, which reverts to Beijing rule next year.

Mr. Shen's accusations of Japanese irresponsibility

represented some of China's strongest diplomatic language yet in a dispute that both Beijing and Tokyo have sought to put behind them.

Analysts say China has been forced to walk a diplomatic fine line between retaining its nationalist credentials and damaging ties with a vital economic partner.

Mr. Shen said China would strengthen security to protect its citizens after Beijing's de facto embassy in Hong Kong reported receiving a threatening letter from Japanese rightwingers.

"The Chinese side will take action at home to strengthen our security," he said, adding that he hoped other "relevant" countries would also protect Chinese citizens.

Meanwhile, Japan, its foreign policy on hold because of a looming general election, sought Tuesday to calm passions in the dispute over the islands.

In a bid to cool tempers, Japan has asked China and Taiwan to prevent a recurrence of Monday's "illegal landings" on the disputed islands in the East China Sea, a Foreign Ministry official told Reuters Tuesday.

The official declined to say what steps Japan would take if activists from Taiwan, Hong Kong and elsewhere tried again to enter what it said were Japan's territorial waters and set foot on the islands.

"What we really want the countries concerned to do is to calm down," he said.

Irish nationalist faction claims Lisburn Army Base bombs

DUBLIN (AFP) — A caller claiming to represent the Continuity Army Council (CAC), a nationalist breakaway faction, claimed responsibility Tuesday for two car bombs that exploded on a British army base southwest of Belfast.

However, the call to Irish broadcasting RTE in Dublin did not contain a recognised code word used to authenticate such claims, the station said.

The two huge car bombs injured 31 people late Monday on the army base outside of Lisburn, 16 kilometres from Belfast.

The CAC has been blamed for the only terrorist bombs in northern Ireland since both the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the loyalist paramilitaries declared ceasefires in late 1994.

The first exploded at a hotel in Enniskillen in the southwest last July and the second was disarmed by police in Belfast last week.

Security forces consider the CAC an armed wing of Republican Sinn Fein (RSF), a small legitimate nationalist party which 10 years ago split from Sinn Fein, the political wing of the IRA.

The CAC denies any "organic" link with the RSF, but supports certain of the RSF precepts, notably its denunciation of the IRA ceasefire declared more than two years ago, as well as Sinn Fein's political strategy.

The CAC considers armed struggle "the only possible path" to securing a British withdrawal from Northern Ireland and its unification with the Republic of Ireland.

Not much is known about the CAC. But experts in Northern Ireland seem sure of one thing: Although the group may have few members, it has the expertise to make powerful bombs.

Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams Tuesday said he was "shocked" at the terrorist bombing of the British base and expressed sympathy for the 31 injured by the two car bombs.

The bombing was a "very serious development," said Mr. Adams, but he added that Sinn Fein remained committed to the peace process.

"If we don't fill the political vacuum with real talks then it is going to be filled by the type of incident which we saw yesterday and throughout the last two years."

He said Prime Minister John Major should "grasp the nettle," adding, "politicians cannot sit on their hands and allow a vacuum to be filled by serious developments."

"I don't know what is going to happen any more than you do," he replied when asked about further attacks.

Meanwhile, military experts sifted through the debris Tuesday to determine how suspected guerrillas planted two car bombs inside the base.

Army sources said the bombs weighed between 500 and 1,000 lbs (250 and 500 kilogrammes) each and were planted so that the second exploded near a medical centre where victims of the first blast were being treated.

Security sources said 12 people were still being held in hospital overnight and several were in critical condition.

Britain's junior northern Ireland minister appealed to loyalist guerrillas, who want the province to stay British, not to break their own truce and go on a tit-for-tat cycle of revenge against the 40-per cent Catholic community from which Irish Republicans draw support.

Protestant guerrillas have so far held their ceasefire, despite the IRA's return to violence in February. The ceasefire was rewarded by the inclusion in peace talks of the loyalists' political representatives, the Progressive Unionist Party and Ulster Democratic Party.

Chernomyrdin says Chechnya must stay in Russia

MOSCOW (R) — Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin Tuesday ruled out granting full independence to breakaway Chechnya and said third parties should not interfere in the long-running conflict.

However, he praised a peace deal clinched by security chief Alexander Lebed with Chechen separatists on Aug. 31 and yielded no ground to critics of the accord, who include many deputies and even the interior minister.

"Russia's territorial integrity, its borders — including internal ones — the provisions of Russia's constitution are not up for bargaining," Mr. Chernomyrdin told the Federation Council upper house of parliament.

"Chechnya is Russia's internal affair. There should be no doubt about that."

But Mr. Chernomyrdin said Gen. Lebed's accord, which ended 21 months of bloodshed, was not a proper legal document.

"There have been no agreements on Chechnya, no one has signed any agreements. There has been a framework of political declarations," he said, indicating that much work remained to be done.

Under Gen. Lebed's deal Russian troops started withdrawing from the region last month. A decision on whether Chechnya becomes independent has been deferred for five years.

Last week Interior Minister Anatoly Kulikov drew loud applause in the State Duma (lower house of parliament) when he described the peace deal as a humiliating step towards the disintegration of Russia.

On Monday Mr. Kulikov accused the Chechen separatists of violating the ceasefire and said the peace deal was undermining Russia's ability to restore order in the region.

Asked about Mr. Kulikov's comments, Mr. Chernomyrdin said: "Such statements lie on the conscience of ministers. What has been accomplished (in Chechnya) must be developed further."

"Efforts by Russian authorities, primarily President Boris Yeltsin and Security Council Secretary Alexander Lebed, who acted on the president's orders, have brought fruit. The war has been stopped."

Mr. Yeltsin, who is in hospital preparing for heart surgery in the next month or two, has already signalled his support for Gen. Lebed's peace deal.

Mr. Chernomyrdin said Moscow saw its main aim in Chechnya now as establishing a basis for a peaceful settlement.

He said Russia would focus on helping to set up a regional administration, demilitarising the region, rebuilding its social structures and preparing for free and fair elections.

Iceland readies for massive glacial floods

SKAFTAFELL, Iceland (R) — Iceland was Tuesday preparing for massive flooding with scientists forecasting a gigantic lake of glacier water melted by an erupting volcano would burst within the next 48 hours.

Engineers were working around the clock in freezing temperatures to reinforce dykes and build slip channels to steer the expected huge torrents of flood water away from the one ring road that winds around the North Atlantic Island.

Scientists at the University of Iceland have been measuring constant seismic tremors since the volcano started erupting under Europe's largest glacier, Vatnajökull, in the island's uninhabited southeast over a week ago.

But atrocious weather including snow blizzards and thick cloud cover have hampered aerial monitoring of the situation.

"There is a steady ongoing tremor of similar magnitude as the past few days," Bryndis Brandsdottir, a seismologist at Iceland University, told Reuters.

"We can't tell by the hour when it will flood but the glaciologists have said it should come before the middle of the week."

The state emergency services declared the area in the island's southeast a danger zone and extended a ban on a 25 kilometres crucial stretch of highway from 8 pm to 8 am.

"Those who travel do so at their own risk," an official of the state emergency services told Iceland's national radio.

The massive Grimsvotn Lake is building up under the Vatnajökull Glacier, about 400 kilometres east of the capital of Reykjavik, which stretches over 8,300 square kilometres.

As the heat from the continually rumbling volcano continues to melt the ice, scientists estimate the lake's water level is rising 10 metres a day and it is only a matter of time before the



A mechanical digger moves tonnes of rubble and boulders to reinforce the dykes along the river banks at the foot of the Vatnajökull Glacier in southeast Iceland. Authorities hope to direct flood waters away from Iceland's main road and bridges system to limit damage from the expected torrent (Reuter photo)

icecap gives way under pressure.

Last Wednesday the volcano burst through the glacier, creating an ice fissure 10 km long and spewing out as tower of gas and smoke up to six km high.

No lives are at risk.

The barren area is uninhabited bar the occasional flock of sheep. Its black, sandy soil is devoid of any trees.

However Einer Hafli-Dasson, chief engineer for the Icelandic Public Roads Administration, said his engineers were racing to lay enough rocks to divert the flood waters when the glacier's cap finally cracks under the strain.

He said up to 30 km of Iceland's national highway crossing the Skeidarsandur plain were under threat from the floods as was a 904 metres long bridge, the only link at one section of the road.

"To replace the bridge would cost about 500 million Icelandic crowns," Mr. Hafli-Dasson told Reuters.

"To replace each kilometre of road and embankment would cost 10 million Icelandic crowns per kilometre."

Scientists estimate that the

torrents could reach a maximum speed of 25 metres a second once the lake finally bursts through the icecap.

Magnus Tumi Gudmundsson, head of aerial monitoring and geophysicist at the University of Iceland, agreed that flooding was imminent but was hesitant over exactly when.

"I would expect it to happen any moment now," Gudmundsson told Reuters. "But we haven't been able to make any precise measurement of the water level in the lake for two days so there is uncertainty when the ice dam will be physically lifted."

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Warnings from logic and mind

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein's and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan's warnings yesterday that the Middle East will have to face prospects of war if the peace process collapses should be taken not only seriously by the Israelis and the Arabs alike. The international community also has a duty, and a real interest, in heeding those warnings as they come from two statesmen who devoted a lot of time and energy to the cause of peace and who remain most committed to that cause.

If last week's violence has convinced Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to start negotiating with the Palestinians on the final status of the Palestinian territories then all the bloody clashes that occurred between Israelis and Palestinians were not in vain.

To his credit, Netanyahu took all sides by surprise when he announced on Monday that his government was now ready for dealing with the final stage of negotiations with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) as soon as the controversy over Israeli redeployment in Hebron was resolved to the satisfaction of both sides. But where comfort taken from his latest move ends is when he seems to dictate well in advance the shape and form of the Palestinian "sovereignty" over their territories.

The prime minister's novel formula rests on the worn out cliché of affording the Palestinians maximum freedom and the Israelis optimum security all at the same time and without spelling out how these two objectives can be justly and fairly reconciled with each other. What the Likud-led government appears to be suggesting is that the PNA may enjoy a semblance of statehood but short of full sovereignty to qualify as, for example, membership in the U.N. It is one thing to insist on a demilitarised Palestinian state and quite another to rob it of all attributes of statehood in matters that count most like recognition as an independent state.

International law and international norms recognise two forms of statehood: one that is independent and free and another which is under the trusteeship of another. There were in the past states which were colonised by powerful countries and referred to under international law as colonies. But the era of colonialism, we thought, ended a long time ago to the extent that the U.N. Trusteeship Council is now defunct and non-operational after all previously colonised peoples won their independence. If Israel now seeks to rehabilitate a bygone era by creating a vassal state for the Palestinian people, then it is in effect taking a backward step which is out of tune with contemporary norms.

The resolution of the final status of the Palestinian territories therefore is the core problem facing not only Israel and the PNA but also the entire comity of nations which we are sure is not about to breathe new life into political relics that belong to the past. By shedding new and contemporary light on the future of the Palestinian areas as of now would lend a great deal of support to the ongoing searches for solutions to the current knotty issues such as Hebron and the fate of East Jerusalem including the holy shrines in it. The closer the parties to that stage of peace talks, the easier it would be to settle intermediate controversies and disputes.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i said Monday that the Arab states should follow Jordan's example of lending full support to the Palestinian leadership in its current endeavours to guarantee the implementation of the Oslo accords. Sultan Al Hattab cited King Hussein's message to the Israeli prime minister in which he stressed Jordan's stand vis-à-vis the peace process, and proposed ideas for ending the deadlock as an example of Arab action. Nothing can create apprehension in the heart of the Israelis like a united Arab front, and nothing can deter the Israeli government from committing further atrocities and carrying illegal measures like a mobilisation of all Arab potentials in the face of aggression, said the writer. He said that though the Arabs are following with deep concern the resumption of the Palestinian-Israeli talks at the Erez crossing, there is no doubt that it would take a very strong, united Arab front to persuade the Likud-led government of Israel to refrain from further acts that would obstruct progress in the negotiations. The writer said as the Arabs watch their Palestinian brothers continually facing the Israeli tanks, the Israeli repressive measures and the Israeli defiance of the world community, they are waiting to see if the U.S.-sponsored peace talks will yield any fruitful results.

Washington Watch

U.S. administration is 'serious' about peace process

By Dr. James Zogby

ON OCTOBER 3, 1996, thirty Arab American leaders received an exclusive in-depth briefing from National Security Advisor to President Bill Clinton Anthony Lake. The forty minute conference call briefing was organised by the White House and included Arab American community representatives from across the U.S.

Mr. Lake sought to ease community concern and disappointment with the inconclusive summit in Washington by providing an assessment of what, from the administration's view, was accomplished in the two-day meeting.

Mr. Lake began with an overview, noting that before the summit Israelis and Palestinians were not engaging in meaningful negotiations. The recent violence, he said, was a serious development, not only for its tragic impact on the two peoples but because of the danger that it posed to the overall peace process and to the broader region.

The limited objectives of the summit were to stop the killing and to move the Israelis and Palestinians back to negotiations. He noted that not only would substantive negotiations now begin, but that after two days of personal rapport, the administration now feels that Mr. Netanyahu is approaching Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat with respect. While the

Israeli prime minister had committed himself to resolving the issue of redeployment from Hebron, Mr. Lake said, "these are words; the challenge now is turn those words into reality."

Responding to a question about the asymmetry of power that mars the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, Mr. Lake acknowledged this as a U.S. concern. That is why, he noted, U.S. Ambassador Dennis Ross is going to the talks at Erez. "Ross is going," Mr. Lake said, "to level the playing field to ensure that Arafat will be treated with respect." "Arafat goes back to Gaza," he continued, "with the U.S. at the negotiating table." In that way, he added, the U.S. feels that it is moving the Palestinian agenda forward by getting talks moving on critical issues with direct U.S. participation.

Mr. Lake also commented on the dire economic conditions facing the Palestinians, noting that, "if Palestinians don't experience the benefits of peace, the Palestinian Authority will be weakened, extremists will win and everyone will lose."

Arab Americans have repeatedly pressed the administration on the economic difficulties facing the West Bank and Gaza. Mr. Lake acknowledged this and encouraged us to continue to press these issues. He announced that just that morning the presi-

dent had signed legislation which extended free trade status to the West Bank and Gaza. The White House release on this legislation notes that this agreement "will expand duty free treatment of products imported from the West Bank and Gaza Strip and help spur economic development throughout the region."

This new trade initiative reflects the continuing commitment of the United States to help open new economic opportunities for the Palestinian people...

The proposal grants products of the West Bank and Gaza Strip special trade status, identical to those accorded products of Israel under the Israel-U.S. free trade agreement. Such a special trade status will provide... and lure increased foreign investment to the West Bank and Gaza.

Mr. Lake was critical of those who have stated that the Israeli prime minister goes home a victor. "This is incorrect," he said, "and Likud's celebrations were not helpful."

When asked if the president had put pressure on Mr. Netanyahu, Mr. Lake indicated that he wanted to use diplomatic language and said: "The president was very clear with Mr. Netanyahu about potential losses" if the peace process was endangered. All parties have to work hard, he said, to bear the ticking clock, before "the bomb goes off."

The U.S., he indicated, knows "how volatile and dangerous the current situation is and views this crisis with great seriousness."

Mr. Lake noted that in his conversations with Jewish Americans he was impressed that a number of the Jewish leaders were dismayed that the summit was being portrayed as an Israeli victory and a Palestinian loss. "They know," he stated, "that the faces of both peoples are intertwined; if one side fails, both lose."

Mr. Lake concluded by praising Mr. Arafat, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and King Hussein for their participation and leadership during the two-day meeting. He also praised the personal efforts exerted by Saudi Arabian ambassador, Prince Bandar Ben Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz, and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and their assistance in working by phone to support the works of the summit.

Those of us who have been active in Washington for two decades were impressed with this outreach effort by the administration. Once again they displayed their resolve to maintain an ongoing and respectful dialogue with Arab Americans.

By recognising the asymmetry of power between Israelis and Palestinians and by taking steps to "level the playing field" the administration takes a step

forward in addressing a deeply held Arab and American concern.

The passage of the Free Trade Act and the National Security advisor's invitation to meet in the next two weeks to explore ways to make this arrangement work for Palestinians is an additional sign of the seriousness with which the administration is viewing both the economic crisis in the West Bank and Gaza and the role that Arab Americans can play in providing creative solutions.

Mr. Lake was serious and impressive in his outreach effort to Arab Americans. The crisis is not over, much work remains to be done. But it is clear that the administration is aware of the gravity of the situation, both in its human dimension and its broader political implications.

If the foundation of Israeli-Palestinian peace is not secured, if Palestinians do not experience directly and quickly the benefits of peace, the process may collapse. The dangers such a collapse poses to the broader region are all too clear. That is why the president took the bold, but risky move to convene a summit in Washington. And that is why the administration is reaching out to both Arab Americans and Jewish Americans — to assist them in saving this process and to secure their support for the difficult work ahead.

Taleban — 'backward, intolerant, even anti-Islamic'

By G.H. Jansen

AS THE new masters of Afghanistan, the Taleban, settle into power tightening their grip on government and the local population, it has become increasingly clear that the movement is not the one thing it is supposed to be. The Taleban is not Islamic and is not only non-Islamic but can actually behave in anti-Islamic fashion: its beliefs and doctrines have little, if anything, in common with the Koran and the teachings of the Prophet Mohammad.

There are, in particular, two aspects of Koranic Islam that Taleban's version of Islam contradicts and violates. For Taleban, which means "student of religion," Islam emerges from the barrel of a gun, that is, is based on force and compulsion. This is in flat contradiction of one of the finest and most uncompromising verses of the Koran (Surah II, verse 256): "There is no compulsion in religion," is violated by the Taleban practice of pushing people into mosques to pray the stipulated five daily prayers.

There is also the saying of the Prophet that while there is special merit in going to a mosque to offer prayers, there is also merit in praying in the privacy of one's own room, provided the

prayer is said with concentration and sincerity. In other words, it is not the outward manifestation that matters but the inner spirit.

Indeed, it is that very contradiction between outward show and the inner spirit that marks all the "Islamic" practices the Taleban is trying to impose on the Afghan people through physical compulsion. Thus, it has been decreed that all men should wear turbans, and in particular black turbans. Also that men should grow beards. This is one more example of the strange equation of hairiness with holiness which is also to be found in other faiths like Christianity and Judaism, and, sometimes, even, Hinduism. The reason for growing beards in Christianity is the assumption that the founder or founders of the faith — Jesus Christ and the prophets — grew beards though there is no factual evidence to prove this point beyond the fact that portraits of Jesus traditionally depict him with a straggly beard, which is, of course, blonde in colour. The Prophet Mohammad is also known to have worn a beard.

The fact that beards are not very widely grown by holy men in other world faiths — Hinduism or Buddhism — is, surely, simply due to the fact that

men in south and south-east Asia do not grow beards all that easily. This should deprive this hirsute adornment of any religious or spiritual significance.

Another example of Taleban's exercise of compulsion is its attitude towards women. In public, says Taleban, all women must cover themselves from head to foot by wearing a burka or chador. This has become such a common practice in Muslim countries that it is surprising to register the fact that in the Koran itself there is only a single verse regulating the dress of Muslim women (Surah XXIV Verse 31) which merely says to women to "draw their veils over the bosoms" and "lower their gaze and be modest." A far cry indeed from the stifling and even unhygienic burka.

This covering-up regulation is just one among several anti-female measures that the Taleban is trying to impose on the unfortunate women of Afghanistan: women should appear in public as little as possible, they should not work outside the family home and they are not to be educated because that opens them to all sorts of dangers. There are no injunctions in the Koran laying down rules of conduct for women in the family and in society.

But the prohibitions of Taleban are certainly contrary to the practice of the Prophet. The two most important women in the Prophet's life were both what would now be called "liberated" because they functioned publicly.

Khadija, his first wife, was a businesswoman who employed the Prophet in her trading firm. She was his first disciple and greatly supported him in his troubles with the antagonistic people of Mecca. Aysa, his second wife, who he married after the death of Khadija, was even more liberated for she led the Muslim army into battle and became the source of several of the "Hadiths," or "Traditions" of the Prophet. He died in her arms in a room in her house in Medina over which was built what is now known as the "Prophet's Mosque".

It is ironic that the Islamic Republic of Iran should be critical of the Taleban which it charges, and accurately, of doing a disservice to Islam while the U.S. seems to favour the Taleban. In both these cases the reason is the same: Taleban is strongly Sunni and therefore opposed to the Shiites — now ruling Iran — which for the U.S. is the greater danger.

Taleban exposes its Sunni fanaticism by imposing the canonical, or Sharia law,

punishments — stoning, amputations and beheadings — which the rest of the world now condemns as archaic and cruel, and even unjust.

That the seemingly devout members of the Taleban should not know the teachings of the Koran on religious compulsion and the rights of women, who are half the population, is not surprising for in Muslim communities in several countries, including India, are to be found youngsters who can recite the word of the Koran by heart while not knowing a word of Arabic and therefore not understanding what the Holy Book says.

The Afghans seem to have a penchant for rulers who are ignorant and brutal; in the 1920s, in an earlier period of turmoil, the master of Afghanistan for a short time was a certain Bacha Saqow, who like Kipling's "Gunga Din" was a water carrier. At the moment Pakistan, where the Taleban originated, is quietly pleased that its "boys" are in control of neighbouring Afghanistan. But like the U.S. with the Afghan Mujahedeen earlier on, the Pakistanis will yet live to rue the day they built up a force which is not only backward and intolerant but actually even anti-Islamic.

Fair quotas?

To the Editor:

I COULD not resist pointing out the irony created by the juxtaposition of two news stories on page 3: "Introduction of women's quota: the yeas and nays" and "Student wins lawsuit against university," (Jordan Times, October 6, 1996).

The first article airs views (mostly negative) about introducing a quota for women to be represented in Parliament through the new election law. Several leaders

interviewed expressed concern that this would be "discriminatory" and not truly "democratic."

The second article reports that a female student successfully sued one of Jordan's state universities for not admitting her to the faculty of her choice, to which she earned entrance by gaining a 96.6 mark in her tawjihi exam. (Four other students with lower scores had been admitted to the same faculty).

Although it was not mentioned if these other students were male or female, it is well-known that the

public universities routinely limit the admission of female students to certain popular fields of study, such as pharmacy, dentistry and education. In fact, a "quota system" is in place whereby the admissions committee does not permit women to make up more than 50 per cent of the total student enrollments in these fields, even though more may have succeeded in earning the competitive tawjihi scores to enter.

It was heartening to read that at least one young woman had the courage to go to court — and succeeded in taking back her rightful place.

It seems that much more open, public debate is needed to achieve consensus and consistency on whether "women's quotas" are acceptable or not. Unfortunately, it appears that the current standard applied is:

if quotas give women access to knowledge and power, they are "unfair," but if they help to exclude women, quotas are a tool for achieving "social balance and fairness" — otherwise known as "the status quo."

Kathy Sullivan,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

IT OCCURRED TO ME

Remember...
Better still,
don't!

By Ali Kassay

Among the greatest pleasures in life are those moments when one catches up with dear friends from whom one is forcibly separated by the burdens of day to day life. This happened when I commented on Jordan Television's coverage of the Olympic games, whereupon I had the pleasure of reading the witty and amusing response of my good friend Nasser Joudeh. Therefore, it is with an added sense of anticipation that I write these reflections on JTV's concept of appropriate information, entertainment and education for its viewers.

Normally, when one contemplates an evening before television, one starts by scanning the papers for the day's offering to pick a programme which one wants to see. This exercise is futile in Jordan since the great sense of adventure, inventiveness and the pioneering spirit that spurs the brave-hearted among us to improvise and explore new horizons, prompt programme planners to present us with a bill of fare that seldom, if ever, bears any relationship to that forecast in the papers. So, in Amman a keen watcher of television has to take pot luck.

Although I cannot claim to be an avid gazer at the box, there still comes a moment now and then when I decide to have a quiet evening, vegetating on the sofa with a cup of tea, a piece of reading material that does not make heavy demands on the cerebellum, and with television switched on in the hope of something entertaining.

Such a moment came last week, and it happened to coincide with the International Day of the Elderly.

So, what did JTV have for the delectation of our senior citizens? Was it a programme on Jordan's work on behalf of the elderly? That would have been mercifully short, since our noble traditions and solid family bonds ensure that people in their advanced years are cared for by their progenies.

Was it a programme on the work done for the elderly in other countries where the state has to compensate for the duties no longer performed by one's offspring? No. The high-point of the evening was a documentary on Alzheimer's disease.

That was really a somewhat ghoulish choice. Imagine yourself as an elderly person. You are already sick to death because of your physically enfeebled state — you need a walking cane or frame for support when you walk or stand, you need the assistance of a younger person to displace an object, the like of which you used to juggle nonchalantly not so long ago. Above all, you are worried nearly to death because your concentration span is beginning to drop, and your memory is not as sharp as it used to be. So here comes a programme that tells you: "Hey, you think this is bad, now see how much worse it can get."

If this is our sense of the appropriate, then perhaps we shall celebrate Civil Aviation Day by replacing in-flight movies on RJ aeroplanes with documentaries on great aviation disasters. Above all, I shall beg all my friends not to celebrate my birthday.

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Features

Cola kings work up a thirst on giant battleground

By Fons Tuinstra

SHANGHAI — Coke and Pepsi's global cola war — promoted by a combined marketing expenditure of almost \$3 billion a year — has reached the streets of Shanghai.

The United States-based transnational manufacturers of the soft drinks, Coca-Cola and Pepsi Cola, are squaring up in a battle for one of the last untapped markets — China's 1.2 billion population — and this vast port city is the testing ground.

On television, advertisements for the two rivals follow each other every hour. Billboards for the competing cola companies overshadow main shopping streets. In the backstreets, many little shops have Coke or Pepsi vending machines, sometimes no more than 50 metres apart.

Shanghai is one of the few places in China where both brands are easily available and consumers have a choice. Although Coke is still market leader among foreign colas, Pepsi is said by traders to be making big inroads into the market.

"Shanghai is a very important market," says Mark Ohlson, Coke's general manager in the city who is responsible for east China operations. "It is the leading edge of China."

Fighting for market share, winning over consumers and encouraging brand loyalty are still fairly new concepts in China.

The largest indigenous soft-drink producer, Jianlibao, outsells its foreign rivals, providing its products more cheaply than the three yuan per can price of

the Western colas.

However, many people in Shanghai — where the average monthly household income is about 1,100 yuan — seem willing to pay the extra to enjoy the glamour of a Western drink. Perhaps they are lured by advertising, which links the drinking of gassy sweetened water with a "modern" lifestyle.

So far, companies such as Jianlibao have not needed to wade into the advertising war. In most of China, soft-drink supplies fall short of demand, so the manufacturers can still sell as much as they produce.

But once supplies catch up to demand, local manufacturers will have to fight harder. By the end of 1997, Coca-Cola will have 23 plants — 16 are in operation now, seven under construction — and Pepsi will have 17 in the whole of China.

"Then we can supply 900,000 out of the 1.2 billion Chinese," says Parker Robinson, a Coke official.

So far, most sales are concentrated in eastern China — colas are unavailable in the west, where average incomes are much lower.

Coca-Cola's lead in the race is partly a reflection of its early start. Days after the country's ailing elder statesman, Deng Xiaoping, announced China's economic liberalisation in 1979, Coke came knocking on the door. Now it claims a market share of 23 per cent — "nearly three times its nearest international competitor."

Sales of the company's products, which include

Sprite and Fanta, rose 38 per cent last year. Pepsi declined to give figures or to comment, but some shop owners say the brand is starting to outsell its big rival.

Two years ago, almost all soft-drink vending machines in Shanghai sold Coca-Cola. Now, almost half sell Pepsi, whose recent TV advertisements are said by many traders to be better than Coke's.

Both companies have also sought to win customers by running lucky-draw contests.

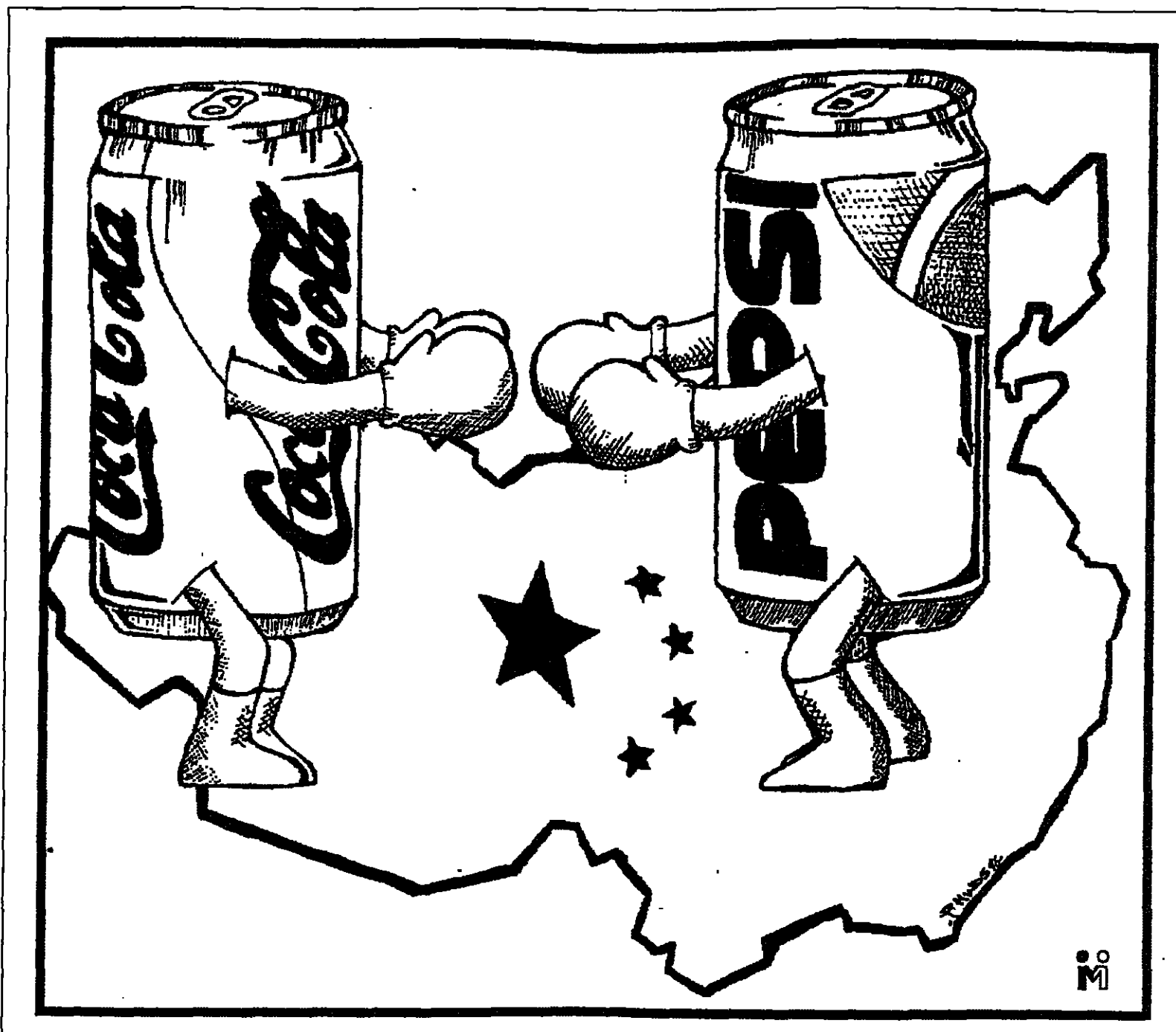
"The lotteries from Coca-Cola were hopelessly complicated," complains a Coca-Cola vendor. "First, you had to send in parts of labels by mail and then you could win something. Pepsi announced winning numbers in the local papers, so you had a direct result."

The cola companies have also fought it out among the vendors, trying to win them over or to keep them loyal.

"Ah, you must be from the Pepsi Cola company," says a woman behind a Coca-Cola counter in a little shop in Huashan Road. "Many people from both Coke and Pepsi come here and talk to us," she says.

Few see a discernible difference between the two brands. "We get the same deal from both — our vending machine free," says a Coke dealer. "So I stay with Coca-Cola because I have a good relationship with them."

A Pepsi vendor vows her loyalty to Pepsi. "Two years ago, it was hard to get these soft-drink machines," she says. "I called Coca-Cola, but they said they had no machines



any more. Then I called Pepsi, and they gave me this one! Now I will stay with Pepsi."

Coke manager Ohlson takes Pepsi's push in his stride. He describes his rival's gains as "the normal ebb and flow in business. It is a tactical push from the competitor, but we don't expect real

changes in the long run." Both firms' agreements with the Chinese government expire in 1997, and

new deals will be negotiated.

Gemini News Service

U.S. government retreats on disputed patent for tribesman's blood

By Charles J. Hanley
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The U.S. government has quietly offered to abandon its rights to a microscopic bit of blood that stirred up a transatlantic storm of controversy, a decision critics welcome as a step back from the aggressive patenting of life forms.

The white blood cells, infected with a rare virus, were drawn from a member of a primitive Papua New Guinea tribe and were thought to have commercial possibilities — for vaccine development or other uses.

After the U.S. National

Institutes of Health (NIH) obtained a patent last year on the "cell line," or culture. Third World activists denounced it as "genetic colonialism." The Papua New Guinea government questioned whether the claim violated that western Pacific nation's sovereignty.

Now the NIH is offering to transfer the patent rights to a trust benefiting the remote tribe, the Hagahai, said sources involved in the discussions, some of whom spoke on condition their names not be divulged.

But biotechnology companies have shown no interest in the cell line.

And as its commercial potential fades, so does Papua New Guinea's interest.

Carol Jenkins, a medical anthropologist in Papua New Guinea who championed Hagahai rights in the dispute, has now recommended against the transfer, citing the legal expense and \$6,000 in fees the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office asks to maintain the patent, said her legal adviser, Henry Greely.

"Dr. Jenkins decided it wasn't worth the time and effort," said the Stanford University law professor. As a result, the NIH is expected to abandon the

patent. Although the cell line may be reaching a scientific dead end, the Canada-based activists who led the anti-NIH criticism hailed the retreat on the patent as a victory against unfair exploitation of poor countries' genetic resources.

"It will be significant to indigenous people in particular," said Jean Christie of the Rural Advancement Foundation International. "It signals that it is beginning to filter through to people in patent offices that these issues are serious and are not going away."

The NIH has also decided, meanwhile, to discour-

age future government patents on cell lines.

"We were blindly patenting things that were patentable," said a well-placed source at NIH headquarters in Bethesda, Maryland. "The PNG cell line certainly fell within that category."

This source said the policy change resulted from a broad review of wasteful patent practices, not from the Papua New Guinea controversy.

But Ms. Christie saw the timing as significant. "It means they're taking seriously the criticism about patenting human cell lines, even if they don't admit it," she said.

It is the latest NIH retrenchment in the contentious area of patenting life forms. Previously the government Medical Research Agency had ended its practice of seeking blanket patents on human DNA fragments even before their functions were determined.

Religious leaders in the United States and Western European politicians are among those proposing moratoriums on the patenting of genes and other life forms, saying life is not a product of human invention.

But the biotechnology industry says patents, which protect future

returns on costly investments, are a necessary support for human genetic research.

The 300 or so Hagahai, long hidden in the New Guinea forests, first made contact with the outside world in 1983, after which Ms. Jenkins, an American working for a Papua New Guinea government institute, began working with them.

In the late 1980s, she and NIH researchers sampled Hagahai blood as part of an NIH programme to test remote populations for virus variants. Hagahai were found to carry a human T-cell leukaemia virus but not develop the

disease. Intrigued by an apparently benign variant that might help them better understand its deadlier relatives, U.S. scientists in 1991 applied for a patent on a cell line developed from a tribesman's blood.

It meant that for 17 years the U.S. government — or a company that bought rights to the patent — would have sole right to use that individual's virus-infected cells for commercial purposes.

Ms. Jenkins also retained rights as an "inventor" of the cell line, but she had said she would devote any eventual royalties to benefiting the Hagahai.

'Israel has to fulfill its commitments'

(Continued from page 1)

ing with them in any way because they lay the ground for our future here. If in the future we do not recognise what our predecessors have achieved where will this leave us? This will definitely rekindle the suspicions and the apprehensions that we have already put behind us," the King said.

Asked whether he was personally convinced of Mr. Netanyahu's sincerity, the King said:

"I had great hopes in the past. But now I can only say that the Israeli elections were an internal Israeli affair. The Israeli people elected a prime minister but did not vote against peace. The majority of the Israelis belong to the peace camp and this was clear when the

Jordan-Israel peace treaty was endorsed in the Knesset. It was not endorsed by the Labour Party alone but by all parties.

"Therefore it is necessary now to appeal to all who belong to the peace camp in Israel and the U.S. and everywhere to defend peace. We are in need of their help now more than any time in the past." Asked how he saw the situation in the Arab World after the Washington summit, the King said:

"Fury bordering on despair. We are sliding towards an extremely psychological stage where people feel the loss of hope. For this reason we should do all that in our power and as fast as we could to address the situation. We have torn down the wall on

both sides and the people on both sides realised that they have common aspirations. We have seen children from both sides meeting together. We have seen so much achieved even between Syria and Israel. I have laid the ground-work for peace through strenuous diplomatic efforts over the past four years. The question now is what should we do? Can we turn the hands of the clock back? Does Israel want to return to the 'siege mentality' and assume the image of arrogance and power? I have had the chance of knowing the Israelis, and I am really concerned about them."

On Jordan and democracy, the King said:

"We have a democracy and in a democracy there is a minority opposed to

peace. What I am saying today expresses my people's feelings but the people will be making their own conclusions should the present state of affairs persist."

On Iraq, the King said President Saddam Hussein's grip on power was now stronger than before. "But I will continue to separate my feelings and those of my government towards Saddam on the one hand and my feelings towards the Iraqi people on the other," the King said. "We want to see Iraq united and living in democracy. I hope that it will not be long before the nightmare ends so that the Iraqis can have a dialogue to decide on their own future and their relations with the world at large."

'Failure of peace process spells disaster for all'

(Continued from page 1)

The Regent said there were drawbacks in making the future of the current peace effort completely dependent on the progress of the negotiations between the Palestinian National Authority and Israel. There are other areas and tracks where progress could be achieved, he pointed out, which in turn would contribute positively to carrying the whole peace process forward.

Addressing the issue of refugees, Prince Hassan said the term "refugees" is becoming politically incorrect because host countries are unwilling to recognise them out of political considerations or fear that they may have to pay state or individual compensations.

Prince Hassan said the integration of refugees was different from assimilating them because integration does not jeopardise the refugees' inalienable rights to compensation or return.

Challenge on home front

Prince Hassan also spoke of the need for interdisciplinary and thematic approaches in tackling the various social and economic issues with which society is grappling.

He called on Jordanians to be proactive in international intellectual debates and should take new initiatives to assert their right to speak for themselves and analyse their own positions in international fora.

He pointed to the multitude of think tanks and international newspapers, which, he said, "tell us what we think and what we should know about ourselves in the Arab World," in terms of figures or facts.

He said it was time that Jordan took up the reins of information about itself and disseminate that to the rest of the world.

In the general context of investments in Jordan and the focus on the private sector's efforts to contribute to economic growth, the Crown Prince expressed the belief that the philosophy of the approach could be missing in the "middle level" of bureaucracy.

One of the answers to the problem lies in "sectoral approach, delegation of authority and involvement of hands-on managers" in the process, he said. At the same time, there should also be result-oriented attempts to raise the economic awareness of everyone involved, including private sector institutions," he added.

In an obvious reference to the insistence of some donor countries on having their own way in Jordanian projects and development, the Regent asked how Jordan could handle the conflicting positions of an increasing number of countries it would have to deal with after it signs the proposed association agreement with the European Union and the Kingdom enters the World Trade Organisation.

In the field of the media and information, the Regent suggested that domestic news take on an interdisciplinary approach.

He said a national information system should bring together what he called "families of subjects."

In other words, issues such as social polarity and economics should not be tackled separately but as interconnected topics and problems that require assessments and solutions, the Regent said.

The Crown Prince named health, education and social productivity as a path for the media to consider and therein apply the concept of the interdisciplinary method in tackling issues by the press, stressing that what is required and could, in Jordan, be a pioneering step, is to write in an interdisciplinary manner or with a thematic approach.

He also recommended, as another example of this meshing of subjects, moving from strictly economic topics to economic/political issues.

The Regent reiterated the importance of analysing how one issue affects two or three others, citing as an example that the redirection or restructuring of the economy is meant to effectively discuss and find ways to create new jobs.

Erbakan

(Continued from page 1)
the traditional foreign policy" of Turkey, which has generally been pro-Western.

Both motions denounce the Libya visit, "marked by diplomatic scandals," adding that "the Republic of Turkey has never been placed in such a humiliating situation."

To make matters worse, Mr. Erbakan raised hackles in Washington by calling a U.S.-backed air embargo on Libya that has been in effect since 1992 "unfair" and stating that U.S. claims that Tripoli supports terrorism are false.

Mr. Erbakan also angered Washington in August by paying a visit to Iran, which the United States accuses of supporting terrorism, and signing a multi-billion dollar natural gas agreement there.

In a belated protest over Col. Qadhafi's behaviour, Turkey Monday recalled its ambassador to Libya, Ates Balkan. Meanwhile the press rounded on the Libyan leader calling him "arrogant" and a "bare-footed bedouin."

A top official of the Social Democrat Party, which has 49 seats in Turkey's 550-seat parliament, accused Mr. Erbakan of "taking an irresponsible attitude" in the face of Col. Qadhafi's "insolence."

Palestinians reject Israeli bid

(Continued from page 1)

Palestinian security patrols in Hebron be increased, and that international observers also be deployed in the city. Israel rejected the offer, saying only the Israeli army could protect the settlers.

Israel's chief negotiator, Dan Shomron, gave a different spin to the negotiations, saying the Palestinians showed understanding for

Israeli security needs. "Therefore I can say there was some progress," the Yediot Ahronot daily quoted Mr. Shomron as saying. Mr. Netanyahu, meanwhile, proposed in his speech to parliament on Monday that the two sides begin negotiations on a final peace agreement immediately after the dispute over Hebron has been settled. A first round of talks on the final agreement

had been held before Israel's may elections in which Mr. Netanyahu defeated Shimon Peres, architect of the peace agreements with the Palestinians. The Palestinians are likely to reject Mr. Netanyahu's latest proposal which implies that Israel would not carry out a commitment made under the interim accords — a further troop pullback from West Bank areas in three six-

month intervals. The first such withdrawal was to have been carried out in early September.

Israel meanwhile lifted its military blockade of the West Bank town of Ramallah, north of Jerusalem. Israel has lifted closures of most West Bank towns since the Israeli-Palestinian summit in Washington last week led to the renewed Israeli-Palestinian talks.



AFM Director-General Omayya Touqan (third from left) prepares to sign the agreement (Petra photo)

French-financed project signed to fully automate AFM by 1998

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Trading at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) will be fully automated by the beginning of 1998 under a French-financed project signed Tuesday by the AFM, SBF-Paris Bourse and the French securities depository SICOVAM s.a. and described as perhaps the most important event for the Jordanian stock exchange.

The project essentially means that every transaction taking place at the AFM would be conducted through a central computer network and every deal at the market will have a work station/terminal.

The process will allow quick documentation of all dealings, and, more importantly, offer easy access for investors into details of the

market situation and thus facilitate the entry of foreign capital into the bourse.

The agreement was signed by AFM Director-General Omayya Touqan and Jean-Francois Theodore, chairman and chief executive of SBF-Paris Bourse as well as chairman of SICOVAM in the presence of the French ambassador to Jordan, Bernard Bajolet.

Under the agreement, the French government will extend a grant of 9.9 million francs (about JD 700,000) and the AFM will put up the rest of the project cost of 10.5 million francs. The project will begin with a survey of the AFM's present situation followed by designing of a master plan for reorganising the trading and registration system and the installation of computer equipment. Work will begin

in November and is expected to be completed in 14 months.

"This project is the most important development in the history of the Jordanian stock market," said Dr. Touqan after the signing ceremony. "It will raise the standards of the AFM to those of international stock markets."

The project is the fourth undertaken by SBF-Paris Bourse and SICOVAM in the Mediterranean region (others are in Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia) and the 10th if Eastern European countries were to be included.

Ambassador Bajolet said the French financing for the project — which rose to triple the amount that was mentioned when it was first discussed several months ago — reflected the increasing level of econom-

ic cooperation between France and Jordan.

According to Mr. Bajolet, French financial assistance, both grants and loans as well as discount offered on Jordanian debts to France, will amount to about 400 million French francs (about JD 28 million) this year. This includes a formal protocol of grants and loans worth 80 million francs, about 150 million francs in discount offered on an debt-equity swap agreed between the two governments, 130 million francs in French contribution to the Middle East Development Assistance project of the European Union that will directly benefit Jordan.

Also included are expectations of about 40 million francs in grants and loans to the Kingdom under agreements being discussed.

Briton, Canadian share Nobel economics prize for work on 'handling different incentives, controlling problems'

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Two researchers who helped improve understanding of how policy-makers deal with incomplete information when making decisions on issues such as tax and credit were on Tuesday jointly awarded the Nobel prize in economics.

Professors James Mirrlees of Britain and William Vickrey of Canada who conducted their research 25 years apart, focused on how contracts and institutions can be designed to handle different incentives and control problems.

"This has generated a better understanding of insurance markets, credit market, auctions, the internal organisation of firms, wage forms, tax systems, social insurance, competitive conditions and political institutions," the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said.

Dr. Mirrlees, 60, an economics professor at the University of Cambridge and Dr. Vickrey, 82, a Columbia University economics professor, will be presented with the Nobel prize — and a shared cheque for 7.4 million kronor (\$1.12 million) — at an official ceremony in Stockholm on Dec. 10, the 100th anniversary of the death of the Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel.

The economics prize, established in 1968 by Sweden's central bank to commemorate its tricentennial, is the most recent of the Nobel awards. Since then, 24 Americans have won it, seven Britons, two Swedes, two Norwegians and one each from Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the Soviet Union.

Dr. Mirrlees and Dr. Vickrey's research addresses situations where decision-

makers have different or incomplete information — for example, where a bank does not have complete information about lenders' future income, or the owners of a firm may not have the same detailed information about costs and competitive conditions as the managing director.

Such information has fundamental consequences, particularly when an information advantage can often be strategically exploited.

Dr. Vickrey studied the properties of different types of auctions — where potential buyers have limited knowledge about the value of the asset or rights up for sale — and how they can be designed so as to generate economic efficiency.

He attached particular importance to the second-price auction, or what is now often called the Vickrey auction where an object is auctioned off in a sealed bidding and the highest bidder gets to buy the object at the second-highest price.

This method where it is in the individual's best interests to state a truthful bid, elicits an individual's true willingness to pay.

The basis of his research has been extended to practical applications, such as auctions of treasury bonds and band spectrum licenses and the method has been used in the bidding for public projects.

In the late 1940s, Dr. Vickrey formulated a model indicating how income taxation can be designed to counter

the principle that a progressive tax schedule affects individuals' incentive to work harder.

Although he formulated a solution in principle, he never mastered its mathematical complexities.

Some 25 years later Dr. Mirrlees who has worked extensively on economic policy in developing countries, found a more thorough solution to the problem. He applied the "revelation principle" whereby individuals are induced to reveal private information truthfully in a way which does not conflict with their self-interest.

Dr. Mirrlees' approach has become particularly valuable in situations where it is impossible to observe another agent's action, so called "moral hazard" which is used extensively in insurance issues.

One of the problems with insurance is that damage to insured objects depends not only on external factors such as the weather and attempted theft, but also on the care taken by the policyholder which is difficult and costly for an insurance company to monitor.

In the mid-70s, Dr. Mirrlees noted that one party's actions indirectly imply a choice of the probabilities that different outcomes will occur. Using a similar incentive scheme, the policyholder cares for the insured object as if it were uninsured.

Britons work longest hours in Europe

STOCKHOLM (R) — Britons work the longest hours in Europe, according to a study by Sweden's central statistics bureau.

Statistics Sweden said Britons on average worked 43.8 hours a week in 1995, excluding overtime.

Portugal came second in the list working an average 41.9 hours a week,

said the report.

Swedes were third, working 40.7 hours which the study said added up to two and a half weeks a year more than 10 years ago.

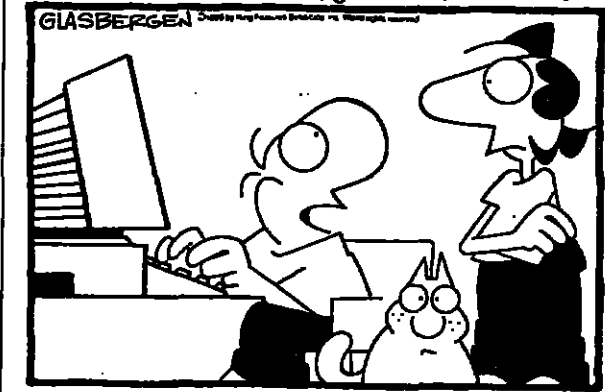
Greece was fourth with 40.8 hours but this included overtime while the other countries surveyed involved only basic hours. Spaniards worked 40.6 hours, the Irish and

French 40.1 hours, and Germans 39.9 hours.

Ninth was Luxembourg with 39.8 hours, the Netherlands notched up 39.6 hours, Denmark 39.5 hours, Norway 38.8 hours, Italy 38.6 hours, and Finland 38.4 hours.

Belgians came last, working on average 38.4 hours a week.

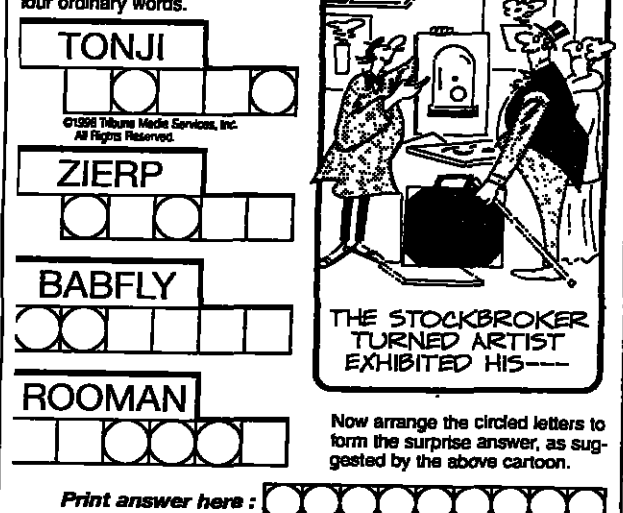
THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"Which e-mail name goes best with my personality: Hunkorama or BabeMagnet?"

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

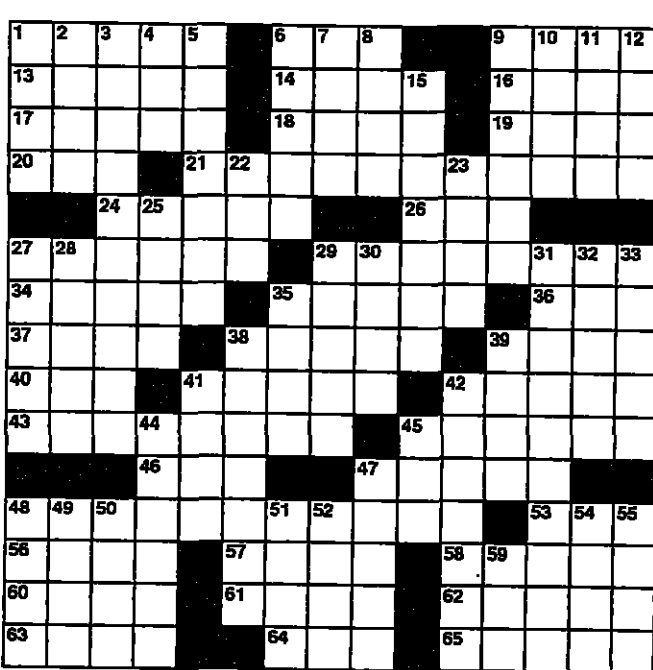


Print answer here: _____ (Answers tomorrow)

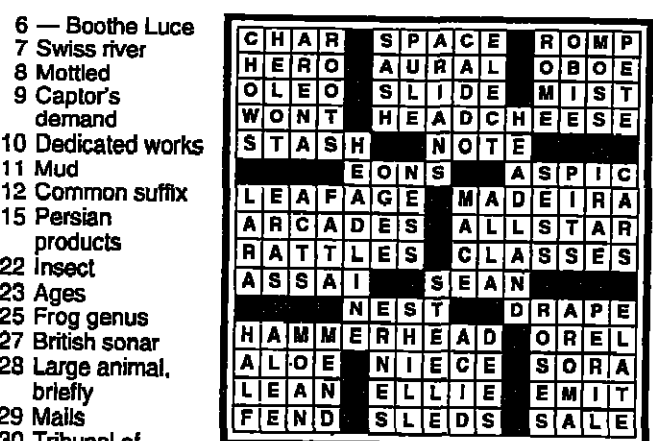
Yesterday's Jumbles: TARRY SWOON UNSAID ASTRAY Answer: Why the best up boxer liked astronomy — HE SAW STARS

THE Daily Crossword by Charles R. Woodard

- ACROSS
- NY city
 - Radiator necessity
 - City in Italy
 - Pluvius
 - Not cleric
 - Mine opening
 - Want to Set the World on Fire
 - Plane surface
 - Fiddler or pianist
 - Washington VIP
 - Beauty shop employee?
 - Idler
 - For
 - Thoroughgoing
 - Preliminary statement
 - Leg parts
 - Footwear
 - Corn unit
 - Prima donna
 - Musical notations
 - Island in the West Indies
 - Relating to: suff.
 - Oscar de la —
 - Group customs
 - October needs
 - Confuse
 - Fuss
 - Oriental inn
 - Impaired speech sounds?
 - Pouch
 - God of war
 - Proficient
 - Term of service
 - Unit of force
 - Legal holding
 - Part of an amphitheater
 - Skating maneuver
 - English river
 - Burdened



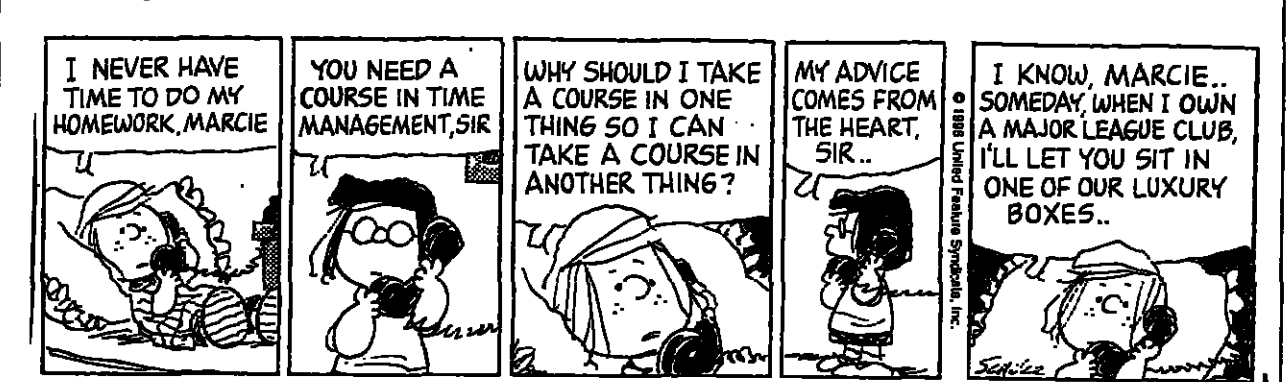
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- DOWN
- Spring bloom
 - Marquis de —
 - Baiting products?
 - Stopover
 - Large snakes

- Boothe Luce
- Swiss river
- Mottled
- Capitol's demand
- Dedicated works
- Mud
- Common suffix
- Persian products
- Insect
- Ages
- Frog genus
- British sonar
- Large animal, briefly
- Mails
- Tribunal of prelates
- Like some fights?
- Name
- Make a VCR error
- Part of n.b. products?
- Withdrawal
- Davenport
- Ill-mannered
- Parade leader
- Dangling ornament
- Bonnet occupant?
- Vista
- If I — hammer...
- African antelope
- Lacoste of tennis
- Actor's prize
- Holly
- Skin problem
- Fictional sleuth
- A Gershwin

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 9, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Handle correspondence and reports in an efficient manner today and thereby you can impress those in authority who will be impressed by how well you conduct business affairs. Later this evening plan make this a romantic time with your mate.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 21) Handle any matters of a practical nature today since later an old situation may arise which needs attention. Later this evening you can make this time special for your mate by doing some special event which he or she will appreciate.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) If you contact the right persons today you can gain your aims far more easily. You should stop being such a loner this evening and plan some activities which close friends will be happy to participate in.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Confess with a superior today and learn how best to gain a wish. Follow through and watch details for any difficulties which you had not counted upon and thereby you can make this time quite successful for yourself and others.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Gain your most cherished wishes and do the research activities needed today to get the right results. Be independent of any criticism and make the best of every opportunity which can come in your direction for the days ahead.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You are inspired early today, however, later situations arise which will take up time and require great effort for completion. Don't get discouraged with the objections of a fellow associate and just go full steam ahead.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Take no unnecessary risks today at all especially with your physical health. You can get fine results in public affairs today and later this evening, so that you can get recognition from those in authority who can be helpful.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You have clever ideas today and you should put them in operation quickly to become more successful. Later this evening will be a good time for taking the time to investigate any information you will need on a project.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Don't throw cold water on the ideas of a good friend today since at some time in the days ahead these ideas can be helpful to you. Later this evening you can complete the business arrangements for some new ideas you have.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Do some angling today so that you can gain your aims more easily. Later this evening handle the mundane aspects of whatever business activities which you are currently involved and they will be fruitful in the days ahead.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Study the conditions at home today and make those changes which are needed to make it a more comfortable place to live. Get the advice later this evening of experts who have the ability to analyse any new ideas.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Stop daydreaming today and handle important matters waiting your attention and thereby you can gain success. Show more thought for your loved ones and they will reciprocate the effort which you put out.

Birthstone of October: Opal — Tourmaline

Government
registers
commercial
telecom
company

AMMAN — The Jordanian Telecommunications Company (JTC), which will replace the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC), was registered officially Tuesday with a JD 2.5 million capital, according to an announcement by Post and Communications Minister Jamal Saraireh.

He said in a statement to the Jordan Times that the company will commence operations as of Jun. 1, 1997 adding that the Council of Ministers will appoint a chairman and members of the board for the new company in the coming two days.

The creation of the company came in implementation of a new law on telecommunications which provides for the transformation of the TCC into a shareholding company fully owned by the government, noted the minister.

In accordance with the communications law, the minister of post and communications will give up his post as chairman of the TCC board of directors and will focus his attention on his new task as chairman of a board entrusted with managing the telecommunications sector.

He said that the board entrusted with reorganising telecommunications the business is the legal successor of the TCC board in all matters pertaining to this sector and in this sense it will be issuing licences and permits for operating telecommunications networks and all other relevant matters.

BETHLEHEM, West Bank (R) — Struggling to save his business from collapse, Palestinian Tawfiq Lama waited with a fleet of empty taxis as tourists walked across an Israeli army checkpoint on their way to visit the birthplace of Jesus Christ.

Facing growing losses after a week-long Israeli ban on the entry of tourist buses from occupied Jerusalem to Bethlehem, the 33-year-old

souvenir shop owner has been contracting private taxis to pick up visitors from the Israeli checkpoint and take them to visit holy sites and then ferry them to his store.

"This is costing me a lot of money. But it is the only way to bring in tourists," Mr. Lama said. He said less than 20 per cent of the normal number of tourists visiting Bethlehem at this time of the year have entered the city.

"Nobody wants to walk across the checkpoint. They become afraid when they are told that they have to leave their buses behind and walk," he said.

Israel sealed off the Palestinian self-rule areas following gunbattles and clashes last month, barring its citizens from travel to the West Bank.

The Israeli army says the closure, which includes barring tourist

buses, was imposed for security reasons.

The Palestinian National Authority said Tuesday it was barring Palestinians from bringing in tourists in private vehicles, demanding instead that Israel lift the bus ban. But the order was not strictly enforced and some tourists still entered Bethlehem in convoys after crossing the checkpoint on foot. The Palestinian ministry of economy and

trade said Israeli restrictions on the West Bank and Gaza Strip have raised daily Palestinian losses to about \$10 million from \$6 million before the violence.

Israel and Jordan reported a drop in the number of tourists arriving since the violence which claimed the lives of 59 Palestinians and 15 Israelis.

imposed following a spate of suicide bombings in February and March, have suffered most. Palestinian

tourism officials estimate that tourism revenues amount to about \$170 million a year. In Bethlehem, the biggest tourist-drawing town under Palestinian self-rule, the ban has prompted many groups to cancel hotel reservations and discouraged many already in Israel.

The Palestinian ministry of tourism gave no figures for the losses. But officials said souvenir shops, restaurants and hotels had all been hurt badly by the clo-

"The Palestinian tourist sector has been paralysed," said Bajes Ismael, director-general of the Palestinian tourism ministry.

of the reception and reservations at the 160-room Bethlehem Hotel, said the Israeli closure ruined what could have been the tourism high season in the city.

She said three tourist

groups occupying 130 rooms in the hotel checked out three days ahead of schedule because of the closure and more had been calling to cancel.

The Business of Information

Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.1056	1.1111
DE Mark	0.4628	0.4651
CH Franc	0.6649	0.5877
FR Franc	0.137	0.1377
JP Yen	0.637	0.6402
NL Guilder	0.4126	0.4147
IT Lira	0.4664	0.4687

JORDAN MARKETPLACE *** JORDAN MARKETPLACE *** JORDAN MARKETPLACE

LONDON (R) — Two Western oil giants, Texaco and Shell Oil Co. said Monday they were discussing a possible merger of their U.S. refining and marketing operations in what could become the world's largest oil retailer.

They said Monday the merged operation, which could take a 15 per cent share of the massive U.S. market and control assets worth \$10 billion, would be in partnership with Saudi Arabia — automatically guaranteeing future supplies from the world's biggest oil producer.

Statements by the two companies were in response to a Wall Street Journal report that said the merger would combine the "downstream forces" of Texaco, Shell, the U.S. unit of Royal Dutch/Shell Group, and Star Enterprise, a joint venture between Texaco and Saudi Aramco, the state oil company of Saudi Arabia.

The newspaper said the new companies would control about 15 per cent of the petroleum-products market in the United States.

"Shell Oil Company confirms it is discussing with Texaco the potential for joint arrangements involving U.S. downstream operations," Shell said in a statement. "While the companies are reviewing a range of options concerning the businesses that might be included, no decisions have been made."

Texaco also confirmed it was in discussions about a potential alliance and said the goal of the talks was to create a more efficient competitive operation maximising the strengths of both companies, including

Oil industry analysts said the proposed merger would cut costs in a fiercely competitive oil refining and marketing industry but wondered how big the savings would be.

"This is the sort of thing the market should like. The question is whether it's really going to happen and what it's worth," said Alan Marshall, an analyst at Robert Fleming. Potential savings might be less than the firms hoped, he said.

"In both Europe and the United States there is a ruthless drive to cut costs," said Peter Bogin of Cambridge Energy Research Associates in Paris. "But you can only cut staffing levels so far. After that you have to look at cutting back elsewhere."

A recent deal in Europe merged the downstream activities of British Petroleum PLC (B.P.) and Mobil to form a \$5 billion firm with a 10 per cent market share, competing with Shell and Exxon.

Robert Fleming's Marshall said the rewards of such a merger might not be as great in the United States as in Europe.

"Unlike with B.P. and Mobil where there was vast potential for cost cutting, Shell Oil has already been a big turnaround story and one would have thought the scope for cost cutting would be more limited," he indicated.

For the Saudi oil giant Aramco, a merger will underline that it can be a big player alongside the Western oil majors, Gulf economists and analysts.



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World Cup qualifiers

Vogts takes second-choice side to Armenia; Spain take on European finalists

BONN (R) — Germany coach Bert Vogts will be forced to field a second-choice side when the European champions open their World Cup qualifying campaign in Armenia Wednesday.

Seven players, including talented libero Matthias Sammer, midfielder playmaker Andy Moeller and defender Thomas Helmer, have pulled out of the group nine clash because of injuries.

Wing-back Christian Ziege, midfielder-cum-defender Thomas Strunz, and midfielder Mario Basler — all from Bayern Munich — and Borussia Dortmund's midfielder Steffen Freund have also been ruled out of the game.

"We are going to have to replace some top people but there is no point complaining," Vogts said. "I still expect to win."

Vogts is likely to give Borussia Moenchengladbach's defensive midfielder Stephan Passlack his inter-

national debut and rearrange his defence around Dortmund's Stefan Reuter who is set to take on the libero role.

Germany's Euro 96 campaign was also plagued by injuries.

Everything has gone wrong for Vogts as the Germans prepare for their first competitive match since their victory over the Czech Republic in the final at Wembley on June 30.

Moeller was the last player to withdraw after pulling a groin muscle during the final minutes of training in Frankfurt Monday. He will be replaced by Bayern's controversial but talented attacking midfielder Mehmet Scholl.

Even with a second-choice line-up, the Germans should walk in. But Vogts is preaching caution.

"I have told them that the last European champions Denmark didn't make it to the 1994 World Cup. The same thing must not happen to us," he said.

At least Vogts can field

two first-choice strikers in captain Jurgen Klinsmann and Euro 96 hero Oliver Bierhoff.

Klinsmann will be looking to an international goal to boost his disappointing form this season.

The Bayern striker, who has been struggling to score in recent matches, denied reports that he had talked to his former club Tottenham about a possible return to England.

"I want to fight my way out of these problems at Bayern. I am just going through a normal phase," he said. "But I have not had any time between cup matches and the Bundesliga to jet over to London."

Expected German team: Andy Koepke, Stefan Reuter, Jurge Kohler, Stephan Passlack, Markus Babel, Dieter Eilts, Marco Bode, Thomas Haessler, Andy Moeller, Jurgen Klinsmann, Oliver Bierhoff.

Real's teenage star to make Spanish debut

PRAGUE (AFP) — Spain coach Javier Clemente has finally decided to give Real Madrid's teenage star Raul Gonzalez his debut in a bid to add much-needed firepower for Wednesday night's World Cup qualifying match against European Championship finalists Czech Republic.

The 19-year-old, who scored twice against the Czechs in the quarter-finals of last season's European under-21 competition, is Real Madrid's top scorer despite being moved into a supporting role by new coach Fabio Capello.

Clemente, who has dropped veteran forward Julio Salinas while Kiko Narvaez is injured, said: "There are some players absent, so it's the right moment to pick Raul." Atletico Madrid's Jose Luis Camarero is fit again and returns to midfield.

Manchester United's Czech Republic star Karel Poborsky has admitted the Euro 96 finalists cannot afford to lose.

Both sides opened their European group six campaigns last month with high-scoring victories over the two weakest teams in the group, with Spain beating the Faroe Islands 6-2 and the republic thrashing Malta 6-0.

However, Yugoslavia have already collected three wins and Slovakia two against the same victims.

Poborsky, signed by Manchester manager Alex Ferguson from Slavia Prague for 3.6 million pounds following his sparkling Euro 96 performances, said: "Spain are explosive and technically very sound."

Czech coach Dusan Uhrin has named 16 of the 19-strong squad which caused a surprise in June.

Scotland's Dodds targets Estonia

TALLINN, ESTONIA (AFP) — Aberdeen striker Billy Dodds, Britain's leading goalscorer, has Estonia in his sights as he seeks a Baltic blast-off for his international career.

Dodds is set to make his first start for Scotland in the World Cup qualifier in Tallinn's Kadriorg stadium on Wednesday when he will search for goal number 15 of the season.

"It was great to make my international debut the other night against Latvia in Riga and it is something I will always remember," said Dodds, who came on as a 59th minute substitute for John Spencer in Scotland's 2-0 win.

"It was the icing on the cake for me really after the way things have gone since the start of the season."

"I actually started some pre-season games on the bench for Aberdeen and I was suspended for our first two games. But then I hit a run of goals and have been playing well and my season has taken off."

Dodds took his bow with Scotland ahead

thanks to a John Collins goal.

"It was better going on with us 1-0 up although we did have a sticky spell in the second-half in Latvia," added Dodds.

"But once we got the second from Darren Jackson we were able to relax and I thought we then played some of our best football."

Now his target is to help Scotland claim three World Cup points with a victory over Estonia and with John Spencer suffering from a hamstring strain he looks certain to get his chance.

"I don't know if I am playing but I think we are going to have a more attacking lineup with Estonia playing only one man up according to what the manager has said."

"I'll be delighted if I am involved and obviously I'd love to get a goal. After Estonia then my aim will be to try and keep getting into the squad regularly."

Manager Craig Brown will tell Dodds and the rest of the Scotland players to make sure they do not let down the Scottish fans.

"I've been speaking to one fan, John Grigor from Ayr, who tells me it has cost him 6,000 pounds this year to follow us," said Brown.

"We have had nine away fixtures this year taking in a visit to Denmark, two in the United States, three at Euro 96 in England, and World Cup games in Austria, Latvia and here."

"That is a lot of miles for someone like Grigor and he is doing it at the bottom end of the market with a bus journey here and there."

"I can remember seeing him in Miami after we had lost 1-0 to Colombia and he was applauding the Scotland performance. He's a critic but very supportive too."

"I will be reminding the players of that last time before they go out on Wednesday to recognise what the cost is to people and not to let them down."

Scotland's fans may even outnumber the home support in the Kadriorg Stadium.



Graf pulls out of European indoor tournament

ZURICH (R) — Steffi Graf Tuesday pulled out of next week's European indoor championship because of a knee injury.

Graf sustained the injury during a tournament in Leipzig last week and withdrew just hours before she was due to face fellow German Anke Huber in the semifinals.

"The joint world No. 1 said that a tendon strain in her left knee had troubled her since her quarter-final win over Austrian Judith Wiesner."

It is the fourth consecutive year in which Graf has withdrawn from the \$1 million Zurich tournament.

Monica Seles, who shares the world No. 1 ranking with the German, withdrew earlier because of nagging shoulder injury and knee problems.

Rockets lose starter

HOUSTON (AFP) — Brent Price, expected to join fellow newcomers Charles Barkley and Kevin Willis in the Houston Rockets' starting lineup, sprained his right knee Monday and will be out two or three weeks.

Price, a point guard, spent his first four National Basketball Association seasons with the Washington Bullets but signed a seven-year contract worth \$18.2 million with the Rockets in July.

Price averaged 10 points, five assists and almost three rebounds a game for the Bullets last season, sinking 46 per cent of his three-point shots. A torn left knee ligament kept price sidelined for the 1994-1995 season.

While Price will miss most of the exhibition schedule, he is likely to be ready for the NBA season opener November 1.

Price's outside scoring touch was considered the final piece of Houston's revamped lineup, which features Hakeem Olajuwon with Barkley and Willis near the basket plus the playmaking ability of Clyde Drexler in the backcourt.

Sports personalities miss Bosnia prizes

BOLOGNA (AFP) — A prize-giving ceremony for top sporting figures who have helped war-torn Bosnia turned into a non-event here Monday night.

International Olympic Committee President Juan Antonio Samaranch, world athletics chief Primo Nebiolo, ski star Alberto Tomba and football legend Michel Platini all failed to take up the invitation.

Samaranch was unwell, while Platini, asked as an organiser of the 1998 World Cup finals, had a FIFA football 2000 meeting the following day.

Nebiolo, head of the International Amateur Athletic Federation and organiser of last month's solidarity meeting for Sarajevo, sent a telegram of support.

"We went to Sarajevo," he said. "And we continue to be there in our hearts."

Tomba, who has hosted Bosnian athletes, donated ski equipment and promised to ski a slalom when the Sarajevo pistes are reopened, sent his mother, Maria-Grazia.

One man who did receive his prize was outgoing Italian Football Federation President Antonio Matarrese, a vice-president of UEFA.

Matarrese has arranged for Bosnia to play all their 'home' matches in the World Cup qualifiers at Bologna, where they meet Group 1 rivals Croatia on Tuesday night.

The highlight of the ceremony was a moving 15-minute film which interleaved footage from the Sarajevo Winter Olympics in 1984, with pictures of the destruction and bloodletting in the Bosnian capital during the war.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Berg joins up with Norway

LONDON (AFP) — Blackburn rovers defender Henning Berg has flown out for World Cup duty just hours after becoming the proud father of a baby son. Berg joins the Norwegian squad in time for Wednesday's European group three qualifier against Hungary after shaking off the effects of a virus infection. Berg, who missed Blackburn's last Premiership game at Coventry, should be back in the frame for this Saturday's home date with Arsenal.

Ferdinand cashes in on boot deal

LONDON (AFP) — Les Ferdinand may not gain the vote from England coach Glenn Hoddle against Poland Wednesday but the Newcastle striker has already cashed-in on his new £1 million pound partnership with Alan Shearer. The 29-year-old striker will sign a new three-year deal with German sports goods suppliers Adidas on Thursday. The six million pound former QPR ace, who hit 29 goals in his first season with Newcastle, already has eight to his name this term, but that is unlikely to be enough to persuade Hoddle to team him with Shearer for the World Cup qualifier.

Bosnich ready to return

BIRMINGHAM (AFP) — Aston Villa keeper Mark Bosnich is standing by to make his first appearance of the season Wednesday night following a catalogue of injury problems. The Australian international, who has not played since the final match of last season at Everton, is set to play for the reserves against Coventry City with a view to making a Premiership return at Spurs on Saturday. Bosnich suffered rib and ankle problems during the pre-season build-up, but it was the knee ligament injury he suffered two days before the start of the season which has kept him on the sidelines.

Maldini to stay at Milan until 2001

FLORENCE (R) — Italy captain Paolo Maldini extended his contract with league champions AC Milan by one year to 2001 Monday. "As you can see, I intend to go a long way," the defender said. "When the contract expires I'll be 33 and then we will see what happens. "Of course I'm influenced by the example of Baresi and if I have accepted to stay for the next five years it means I haven't ruled out possibly emulating Franco." Milan captain Franco Baresi, now 36, notched up his 500th league game for Milan last season and is still playing for the club, which he joined in 1977. Maldini joined Milan in 1984 and, like Baresi, has remained there.

Yamaha to supply engines for Hill and Arrows

LONDON (R) — Damon Hill will be relying on a new Yamaha engine when he drives for the TWR Arrows Formula One team in next season's world championship. The Japanese manufacturer announced Monday it was joining forces with Arrows in a one-year deal, having concluded a four-year association with Tyrrell. "This is a new era for Yamaha... We are looking forward to an exciting future together," said Herbie Blash, Yamaha's Formula One sporting director. Hill requires one more point in Japan this weekend to clinch the 1996 world drivers' title in his final race for Williams.

Armstrong fights cancer

PARIS (AFP) — Lance Armstrong, the 1993 world road race cycling champion, revealed Tuesday he had testicular cancer and would be undergoing chemotherapy. The 25-year-old, who has returned home to Texas, has told his Cofidis team he intends to be back for the end of the 1997 season. "Lance remains our team leader and we are looking forward to winning with him again in 1997," said team manager Cyrille Guimard. Armstrong has undergone surgery to remove a tumour but a scanner revealed the cancer has spread to his lower abdomen and he will now have chemotherapy for a minimum of 12 weeks. He has been told he has between a 70 and 90 per cent chance of fully recovering and returning full-time to professional cycling.

Rosset breezes past tired Ferreira

VIENNA (R) — Weary Wayne Ferreira was the first seed to crash out of the \$800,000 CA Trophy on Monday. The number four from South Africa lost 6-2 7-6 to Switzerland's Marc Rosset. Rosset impressed with some thundering aces which allowed him to clinch the first set in only 24 minutes. Although world number six Ferreira stepped up a gear in the second set, he was unable to gain command on the indoor hardcourt at Vienna's Stadthalle. Unlike Ferreira, seventh-seeded Todd Martin was fully motivated and had little problems in overcoming Spain's Alberto Costa 6-3 6-2 in only 59 minutes. Top seed and local hero Thomas Muster enters the tournament on Wednesday. He faces Italian Gianluca Pozzi, a finalist in 1992. The world number three will be looking for his first victory in Vienna after reaching the final in 1988, 1993 and 1995. On Monday, Muster was arguing his case at International Tennis Federation (ITF) headquarters in London where his Austrian Davis Cup team were ordered to forfeit \$59,000 in prize money for failing to complete last month's Davis Cup match against Brazil in Sao Paulo. Austria refused to complete the tie after Muster walked off court in protest at what he felt was threatening behaviour by the home crowd. But Austrian attempts to have the tie replayed at a neutral venue failed. The ITF also confirmed on-site fines totalling \$8,000 on Muster.

Roche out of Turkey match

PARIS (AFP) — French defender Alain Roche has had to pull out of France's friendly against Turkey Wednesday after complications in an ankle injury. Paris Saint Germain central defender Roche was a firm part of Aime Jacquet's plans for the match, but further pain has ruled him out. "There's a limit to the pain I can take," said Roche. "I have pieces of bone or cartilage floating around in my right ankle and it just hurts too much." Jacquet has called up Monaco's Martin Djetour, who was in France's Olympic squad, as cover for both Roche and AC Milan's Marcel Desailly, who has a slight injury to his right calf. And up to 15,000 of France's 400,000-strong Turkish population are expected to turn up for the game.

Extra incentive awarded to shatter Sydney-Hobart race record

SYDNEY (AFP) — The

cruising Yacht Club of Australia Tuesday dangled a 300,000 dollar (\$237,000) inducement for a record-breaking run down the Australian eastern seaboard in this year's Sydney-Hobart Yacht Race.

U.S. Maxi Kialoa has held the race record of two days 14hrs 36min 56sec since 1975.

Last year, Australia's top Maxi Brindabella and U.S. Ketch Sayonara took just outside three days to

finish.

The return of Sayonara this year sets the scene for another two-way battle across treacherous bass strait to the Tasmanian capital of Hobart.

"It's a freak of nature that it's taken 21 years for the record to be broken," said Brindabella skipper David Adams Tuesday.

The commodore of the cruising Yacht Club of Australia, Peter Bush, agreed, saying the record remained a particularly

amazing feat when technological developments in the sport since then were considered.

"The boats now that are being built would be 25 per cent faster than Kialoa was back then. And I think that now it's been there for so long, it will be a really emotional achievement for whoever goes on to break it."

The race begins in Sydney harbour on December 26.

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	Kevin Costner ... in WATERWORLD Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6, 8:30, 10:45	The Arab Cinema Surprise Ahmad Zakiin NASER 56 (Arabic) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:45, 11:00	CONCORD "1" FRENCH KISS Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD "2" UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Today presents Zawad Weld Awad theatre group in the play entitled Five-Star Government Starring comedians: Mahmoud Saimah & Hussein Tubishat Play starts 8:30 p.m.	
				Nabil & Hisham's Theatre TEL: 625155	
				PRESENTS THE SATIRICAL COMEDY Arab Human Rights At 8:30 p.m. For reservation please call 625155 - 640155	

World Airlines Squash Tournament

Ansett score big win as RJ remain unbeaten

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Ansett New Zealand Tuesday overwhelmed Dublin 6-1 on the fourth day of 11th World Airlines Squash Tournament currently underway in Amman at Al Hussein Sports Centre.

In another match, New Zealand defeated Lufthansa 5-2, while Monday's matches gave Royal Jordanian their third win in the tournament after crushing Swissair 6-1. Emirates also defeated New Guinea 6-1; British Airways overcame Ansett Australia by the same score and Qantas crushed Cathay Pacific 7-0.

Wednesday is a rest day for the participating delegations who will have a chance to visit the rose-red city of Petra in a trip organised by hosts Royal Jordanian.

The tournament, held under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, opened Saturday at Al Hussein Sports City with 17 international airline companies taking part.

The hosting of the competition in Amman follows last year's title win for the Royal Jordanian (RJ) squash team in the 10th tournament in Dubai after a convincing 5-2 win over British Airways.

The competition, organised by the RJ Squash Club brings together teams from the following airlines: Ansett New Zealand, Ansett Australia, Lufthansa, Emirates, New Guinea, Cathay Pacific, Hunting-Cargo Dublin, British Airways, Qantas, Air New Zealand, Syrian Arab Airlines, Egypt Air, Gulf Air, Sabena, Singapore Airlines, Swissair and Royal Jordanian.

Jansher Khan pushed to the limit

DOHA (AFP) — World champion Jansher Khan off Pakistan was pushed to the limit Monday in the second round of the Qatar international squash tournament here, finally ousting Egypt's Ahmed Barada in five sets.

Khan just edged the 20-year-old after a dramatic 90 minute contest which he should have won in half the time, having taken the first two sets 15-10, 15-13.

But his young opponent then staged a remarkable comeback in front of his own raucous supporters, taking the next two sets 15-14, 15-8 as he matched Khan all the way.

Jansher coasted the first set but then his opponent rallied from 2-9 down to 10-all in the second, before the Pakistani took the set with a deceptive crosscourt backhand drop and a forehand volley kill.

But Barada soon showed he too has a repertoire to be proud of, hitting a series of inch perfect straight drops and volley drops, interspersed with the occasional lob.

He won the third set on an inch perfect forehand drop and then took the fourth as Jansher was hit by three penalty strokes by referee Bruce Kettle for not clearing.

In the vital fifth, Barada was in touch at 6-8, but over-eagerness cost him points and Jansher kept his composure to snatch victory on another deceptive crosscourt drop.

Hill one race away from fulfilling dream

LONDON (R) — Damon Hill hopes to realise his most cherished dream on Sunday by emulating his father Graham and winning the World Drivers' Championship.

Hill needs only to finish in the top six at the final grand prix in Suzuka, Japan, to take the 1996 title and crown a year of high drama and disappointment.

In spite of his achievements, Hill has been dropped by his triumphant Williams team and replaced by German Heinz-Harald Frentzen for next season.

But a championship title would make up for the hurt and mark the end of six years of consistent progress from test driver to champion.

The son of a double world champion driver, Hill had to climb to the top in motor racing against his mother's wishes and by digging deep from an early age into his own reserves of determination and ambition.

Hill, 36, had a privileged childhood as the son of Graham Hill, world champion in 1962 and 1968, and enjoyed a carefree early life in private schools and on exotic holidays.

But he lost all that when Graham was killed in a light plane crash at Elstree, England, in 1975.

His death had a catastrophic financial effect on the family, leaving his wife Bette, Damon and daughters Samantha and Brigitte to grow up in the glare of fame but without the support of either a heroic male figure at the head of the family or the wealth he had accumulated.

Insurance claims arising from the accident decimated the value of his estate. For his only son it meant a life of challenges if he was to rise and deliver achievements to match those of his father.

Damon had his first opportunity of driving a car when he sat on his father's knee at the age of five — an experience which stimulated a lifelong addiction to speed.

As a teenager, however, he began his racing career on two wheels rather than four, following a spell of work in London as a motorcycle messenger during which he was a member of a little-known punk rock band.

His career as a motorcycle racer began in 1979 and he improved sufficiently over the years to win 40 races with his Yamaha TZ 350 before switching to Formula Ford racing in the second half of 1984.

From 1985 onwards he graduated through Formula Ford, British Formula Three and the international F3000 championship with a variety of teams, scoring only moderate success, before in 1991 becoming Williams' test driver.

Hill kept the job in 1992 when he also raced in Formula One for the first time for the now-defunct Brabham team. He qualified for his first Grand Prix, the British, at Silverstone that year and finished 16th.

The following year Hill was offered the number two drive at Williams alongside

Frenchman Alain Prost and finished third in the title race after overcoming a nervous start to score a hat-trick of successive victories in Hungary, Belgium and Italy.

In 1994, he was partnered by triple world champion Ayrton Senna of Brazil who was killed at the San Marino Grand Prix early in the season.

This left Hill as team leader and he responded with dignity in difficult circumstances.

After a season-long battle with Germany's Michael Schumacher, Hill was the victim of a dramatic collision in the final race in Australia and missed the title by a single point.

He was second again in 1995, in less controversial but far more disappointing circumstances. Hill determined to overcome this by training and organising himself better than ever in the winter after moving home from England to Dubai.

There he and his family have lived away from the bright lights, giving Hill a chance to protect his wife and three children from unnecessary publicity.

His eldest son Oliver, born with down's syndrome, particularly needed special care and attention. Hill's devotion, despite all the difficulties, earned him worldwide respect.

For his fans, Hill's success will represent the triumph of a family man who never lost his good humour or his good manners in pursuit of a dream.

Steelers beat Kansas City Chiefs 17-7

KANSAS CITY (R) — Mike Tomczak threw for 338 yards and Jerome Bettis scored the go-ahead touchdown late in the third quarter as the Pittsburgh Steelers beat the Kansas City Chiefs 17-7 on Monday.

Tomczak, working against a secondary weakened by the absence of injured cornerback James Hasty, was 20-of-32. He consistently picked on rookie defensive backs Jerome Woods and Reggie Tongue.

Jerome Bettis rushed for 103 yards on 27 carries, and Charles Johnson had six receptions for 125 yards.

The Steelers totalled 436 total yards of offence. Chiefs running back Marcus Allen had a six-yard touchdown run in the second quarter, moving past Jim Brown into second place with 107 rushing TDs. He needs three to tie all-time leader Walter Payton.

Allen rushed 18 times for 69 yards, and Steve Bono was 18-for-29 for 170 yards and two interceptions. Chris Penn had seven receptions for 80 yards.

On its fourth trip inside the Kansas City 5, Pittsburgh finally scored a touchdown to take the lead. Bettis appeared stopped at the line of scrimmage, but kept churning and broke outside for a five-yard TD with 2:41 left in the third.



Pittsburgh Steeler running back Jerome Bettis crawls past Kansas City defenders for a five yard touchdown run late in the third quarter in Kansas City October 7. Pittsburgh defeated Kansas City 17-7 (Reuters photo)

Yanks, Orioles open series

NEW YORK (R) — Controversy often follows the New York Yankees, but this time it is their opponent in the American League championship series, the Baltimore Orioles, making the juicy headlines.

The Yanks host the Orioles to open a best-of-seven series for the right to represent the American League in the world series. The series champion Atlanta Braves entertain the St. Louis Cardinals in the NL version starting Wednesday.

The spotlight of the post-season so far has focused on Baltimore's all-star second baseman, Roberto Alomar.

Alomar triggered a storm of outrage and protest after spitting in the face of an umpire on the last weekend of the regular season, then escaping immediate suspension. He has since taken rousing advantage of the leniency.

Showing nerves of steel and great concentration as boos and jeers rained down on him, Alomar put the Orioles into the playoffs and through the first round with his bat.

As for the games, the East Division champion Yanks appear to hold an advantage over the wildcard Orioles. The Yankees beat the birds 10 of 13 times, including a spotless 6-0 mark against the Orioles at Baltimore's Camden yards.

The Yankees boast a more consistent starting rotation and a dominant bullpen that has been nearly flawless in making late-game leads stand up.

But the long-ball threat up and down the Orioles lineup is dangerous enough to swing any series. Baltimore, whose leadoff man Brady Anderson slugged an astonishing 50 homers, broke the record of the 1961 Yankees for most homers in a season.

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Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ A J 5 2
♥ 7 5 2
♦ 7 5 4
♣ A K Q

EAST
♠ A 8 7
♥ K 10 9 5
♦ 8 8 2
♣ 9 8 5 3

SOUTH
♠ K Q 9 8 5
♥ A 6
♦ K 10 9
♣ 10 7 6

The bidding:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1♠ Pass 1A Pass
2♠ Pass 4♠ Pass
Pass

Opening lead: Queen of ♥
Follow the bidding and play of this deal, then decide who, if anyone, committed a gaffe.

One club is the correct opening bid even if you play four-card majors. No response by partner can cause a rebid problem. The rest of the auction is automatic.

West's queen of hearts was allowed to win, declarer taking the ace on the second round. Trumps were drawn in two rounds, ending South short. The remaining heart was ruffed in the closed hand. The clubs were cleared, and a diamond was led to the nine. In with the jack, West had a choice of losing plays. To continue diamonds would give declarer a trick in the suit, while a heart or a club would allow declarer to ruff in one hand while discarding a diamond from the other. Either way, the defenders would get only one heart and two diamonds.

Declarer played the hand well, but East should not have allowed South that luxury. The defender squandered the most critical asset for the defense at the first trick!

Suppose that, at trick one, East were to play the king of hearts on partner's queen. If declarer ducks, East shifts to a diamond. West wins and exits with a heart, and eventually will get two more diamond tricks to score a one-trick set.

If declarer wins the first trick, East can still gain the lead in hearts for the diamond play. Again, West will have a safe exit in hearts, so declarer will suffer the same fate of losing three diamond tricks.

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Masood counterattacks Taleban as Dostum and Rabbani discuss alliance

SALANG PASS (Agencies) — Forces loyal to former Afghan military chief Ahmad Shah Masood counterattacked in the Salang Pass on Tuesday against the Taleban militia that drove him out of Kabul.

Taleban fighters said. They said commander Basir Solangi, Mr. Masood's commander in the Salang Pass who had withdrawn north into territory controlled by Uzbek General Abdul Rashid Dostum, attacked through the pass and over the mountainsides.

The Taleban fighters said Gen. Dostum's men were not involved in the fighting, in which the two sides exchanged artillery, mortar and small arms fire throughout the day. But the fighting, which drew Taleban forces from their attempt to thrust into the Panjshir, increased the tensions between Gen. Dostum and the Taleban, who have taken some three-quarters of Afghanistan in their two years of existence.

"Dostum gave the order for the attack," said one Taleban fighter manning a road block in the Salang Pass.

Gen. Dostum moved armour and men south of the Salang Tunnel, a key choke point on the road from Kabul through the Hindu Kush to his base at Mazar-e-Sharif, as the Taleban took the Afghan capital and said this week he would back those opposed to the Taleban if the militia did not stop fighting.

There was no firm word on the outcome of Tuesday's fighting, but the Taleban fighters said their frontlines, previously some five kilometres from Gen. Dostum's Uzbekes, had pushed forward. Afghan warlord Gen. Dostum and ousted President Burhanuddin Rabbani met on Tuesday for talks that could prove ominous for the Taleban.

Gen. Dostum and Mr. Rabbani embraced on a highway near Mazar-e-Sharif and proceeded in a convoy to a military base for talks.

The meeting followed a report from a senior Afghan diplomat that Gen. Dostum would join forces with Mr. Rabbani in resisting the advance of the Taleban.

Hundreds of Dostum soldiers were standing in uniform at attention with their weapons

along the road into Mazar-e-Sharif, 400 kilometres north-west of Kabul. Mr. Rabbani also met a group of several hundred city dignitaries and army officials standing on one side of the highway.

After the highway formalities Gen. Dostum and Mr. Rabbani climbed into a limousine for the ride to the Kala Jangy base west of the city, which is a stronghold of Gen. Dostum's followers.

Before he met Mr. Rabbani, Gen. Dostum told reporters he would prefer not to answer any questions until Mr. Rabbani spoke.

"Let us wait until the president is here and let him speak and then I will answer your questions," Gen. Dostum said, adding: "Masood will come today or if he cannot make it today then tomorrow."

Others in the Dostum entourage told Reuters virtually every major figure opposed to Taleban in Afghanistan would be gathering here in the next few days.

Asked if Mazar-e-Sharif was becoming the new capital of "free Afghanistan," Gen. Dostum merely smiled and turned away as the president drove up.

Aid agencies' demand

Kabul's aid community demanded the new Taleban administration allow women to return to work or humanitarian projects in the capital would be forced to close.

In a "cordial" 90-minute meeting with Taleban acting Foreign Minister Mullah Mohammad Ghaus, United Nations and non-governmental aid agency officials aired their concerns about the strict stance the Taleban has imposed on women.

"As a last resort we will have to stop all of our programmes here unless the Taleban allow women to return to work," Sue Emmott of the British aid group Oxfam told reporters.

"Our principles and mandate will remain unchanged, and we will support our female staff, who feel the Taleban treat them like animals."

Many humanitarian projects are dependent on female staff and access to women, in particular those which target the capital's widows.

Kabul has an estimated

30,000 widows who are the sole bread-winners for their families.

According to the officials, Mr. Ghaus was "astonished" at the level of international concern for "such a small percentage of the working population."

Mr. Ghaus also told a committee formed by aid agencies to voice concerns over women, that the Taleban were still getting to grips with governing a modern capital city.

But he assured them that the issue would be raised at the highest level within the Taleban movement here.

The officials said Mr. Ghaus had given his assurance that working women would continue to be paid until the issue was solved, and women could return to work once peace and security could be guaranteed.

However, the minister gave no details of a timetable for allowing women back into the workplace.

The committee also expressed concern that the international donor community may pull the plug on projects in Afghanistan in reaction to the strict form of Islamic law being enforced in Taleban-controlled areas.

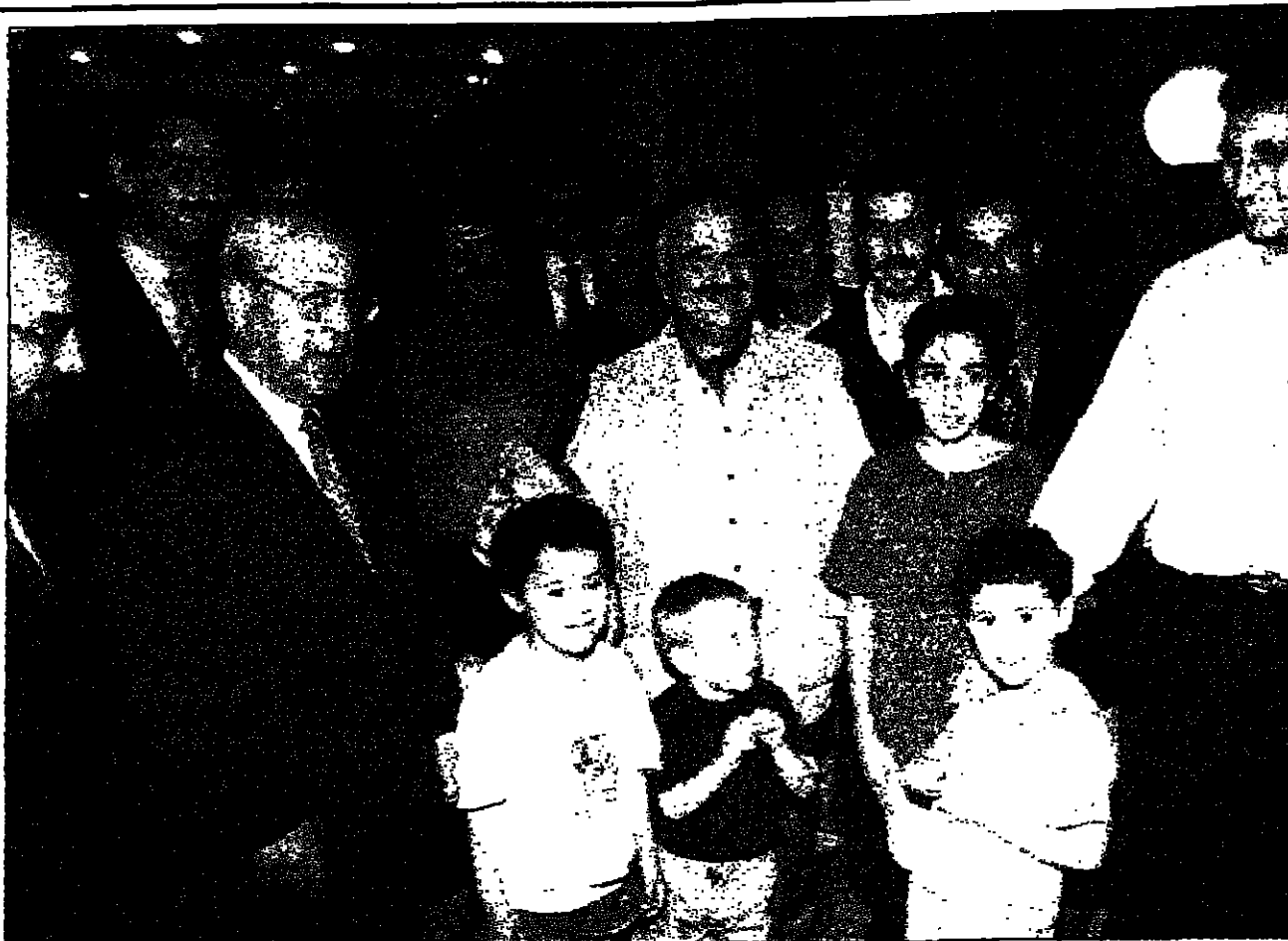
"We are committed to working together, and I hope donors can see this," the local head of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Terry Pitzner, told reporters.

"We have recognised the need for dialogue and hope the issue can be resolved in two weeks time," he added.

A second meeting on the issue is scheduled to take place in seven days, but aid groups are expecting a drawn-out process of negotiations and no sudden change in Taleban policy.

"We have observed all the principles of the Koran and have applied them. We cannot say that other Muslim countries are unIslamic, but they have not fully applied Islamic principles," Mr. Ghaus said explaining the relative severity of the Taleban's Islamic rule.

The Taleban have also banned music, television, sports, kite-flying, and girls' education in the two thirds of the country they have seized since springing up two years ago.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, poses with children from the Jordan Times neighbourhood, during a visit he paid to the newspaper on Tuesday. The Regent called in the children who were watching from a distance and chatted with them for some time (Photo by Yusef Allan)

Time is ripe for EU, particularly France, to assume active role in peace process — Regent

By Jordan Times Staff Reporters

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, said Tuesday the time was ripe for the European Union and France in particular to take an active role in the Middle East peace process and to advance initiatives to solve outstanding problems between Arabs and Israelis.

The Crown Prince, expressing hope that the Europeans will play a more assertive role in the region, said the upcoming visit of French President Jacques Chirac to Jordan and neighbouring countries can enhance dialogue and promote the cause of peace. "More than any time before, the Arab cause and grievances need to be heard," he told the Jordan Times yesterday.

The French president is expected to pay an official visit to the Kingdom in the third week of this month. He will also visit Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Israel and Gaza.

"It is the right moment (for France and Europe) to

act and take an active role in the region," the Crown Prince said. President Chirac's "visit, from a psychological point of view, is needed to encourage dialogue."

Since President Chirac took office last year, France, on several occasions, has showed a growing interest in the Middle East peace process and in playing a mediatory role in such conflicts as the mini-war that erupted between Israel and Hizbollah in Lebanon in the spring.

"Certainly," the Crown Prince said, in reply to a question on whether Jordan was ready to accept a greater French role in the region. "French and European initiatives are important in attempts to address Arab grievances and regional problems."

The Crown Prince, lamenting that the European Declaration of 1981 is not being heard much about these days stressed that there is a real need to acknowledge Arab rights and aspirations at this particular juncture in the

region's history.

Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring, whose country holds the European Union presidency expressed hopes during a tour he made in the region last week that Europe and the United States both have a constructive role to play in the Middle East.

But U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher rejected any European role in the negotiations stressing that Europe should limit its activities to helping the Palestinians financially.

French Ambassador to Jordan Bernard Bajolet on Tuesday described President Chirac's visit as very significant, noting that it was the first time that a French president was visiting all the parties involved in the Middle East peace process in one go.

"President Chirac will be addressing all issues related to the peace process in a very frank and candid manner because France realises the importance of ensuring peace and stability in the Middle East," said Mr. Bajolet.

On the bilateral front, Mr. Bajolet said France was keenly interested in building economic cooperation with Jordan and that while annual French assistance had declined on a global level — from seven billion francs four years ago to less than four billion francs now — the country's aid to Jordan had actually gone up.

According to the ambassador, French assistance to Jordan this year, including grants and loans already given and in the pipeline as well as discount offered on a debt-equity swap, would be more than 400 million francs.

Mr. Bajolet was speaking to the Jordan Times on the fringes of a ceremony at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) where SBF-Paris Bourse and the French securities depository signed an agreement under which the AFM would be automated by the beginning of 1998. The French government is financing the project (see page 8).

Washington calls Erbakan visit to Libya disturbing

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States on Monday delivered what officials termed a "stiff rebuke" to North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) ally Turkey over a visit to Libya by Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, saying remarks he made there were surprising if true.

The State Department called it "most disturbing" that the premier had gone at all to what Washington says is a terrorist state, comparing his trip to one it attacked earlier this year by U.S. Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan.

Spokesman Nicholas Burns said the department was still checking the accuracy of Turkish media reports quoting Mr. Erbakan as saying that Libya was "against terrorist activities" and was "the country suffering most from terror."

Turkey's state-run Anatolian news agency quoted Mr.

Erbakan as making the comments on Sunday after being shown around a house belonging to Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi in Tripoli that was hit during air strikes by U.S. fighter bombers in 1986.

"I'd just be very surprised if these reports turn out to be true very, very surprised about these comments," Mr. Burns told a news briefing.

"Libya has been one of the leading terrorist states in the world. I'm not aware that Libya has suffered from terrorism," Mr. Burns said. "It would be highly surprising indeed, if the prime minister of an allied country were to defend a terrorist like Muammar Qadhafi."

Western countries hold Libya responsible for the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Scotland in 1988, which killed 270 people. The United

Nations has imposed sanctions on Libya, demanding that it hand over two suspects in the bombing.

"It's up to allies to be good allies and to understand you cannot pick and choose places where you're going to support us or not support us," Mr. Burns said. He noted that Washington had backed Turkey in its fight against separatist PKK guerrillas.

"You can't just go to another country and meet a dictator and absolve him of all responsibility for a terrorist act," Mr. Burns added. "The United States remains troubled by any trip that could be seen as benefiting the Qadhafi regime."

The United States often bends over backwards to avoid criticising Ankara, keen to ensure that Mr. Erbakan does not follow through on past pledges to move Turkey away from the West and towards the

Islamic World.

But Washington made no secret of its anxiety when Mr. Erbakan visited Iran soon after his appointment in June and signed a \$23 billion gas deal there.

State Department officials described Mr. Burns' remarks about Mr. Erbakan, whose trip has caused uproar in Turkey itself, as "tough comment" and one said: "You should see that as a very stiff rebuke."

"To see the Turkish prime minister go to Libya and say that we're a terrorist nation, to congratulate Qadhafi and say that he's a victim of terrorism, this is just objectionable," said the official, who asked not to be identified.

Mr. Erbakan also reportedly proposed to triple trade with Libya, but Burns said Turkey should respect U.N. sanctions. "They ought to understand that sometimes commerce has to

take a back seat to the fight against terrorism," he added.

Despite Mr. Erbakan's reported sympathies for Libya, Qadhafi upset Turkey by calling for foundation of a Kurdish state anathema to Ankara. Turkey said Monday it was temporarily recalling its ambassador to Tripoli over the affair.

"Maybe his new interlocutors are finding out just how unreliable Colonel Qadhafi is," Mr. Burns said.

Mr. Erbakan followed up his trip to Libya by visiting Nigeria, a country that is also in Washington's bad books. Mr. Burns compared the tour to one last January by Mr. Farrakhan, who visited the same two countries as well as Iran and Iraq.

"We've been through this

Returning Gulf Indians lock up ship's captain to protest delays at port

BOMBAY (R) — The captain and crew of a ship carrying Indian workers expelled from the Gulf had to be rescued after the frustrated passengers held them captive in protest against customs and immigration delays, police said on Tuesday.

They said the Filipino captain and the crew of the cargo vessel Seawolf were freed after being held for some time on Monday. The ship had been waiting offshore for nearly two days before berthing on Tuesday.

"They locked up the captain. We received a radio message. We asked for police. Only then could we board the vessel," said Raksha Mapara, an official of the local agents for Seawolf.

"It was the delay of nearly two days that created the problem. First we organised medical aid and then provided food and water for them. But they were not keen to have anything. They just wanted to get ashore."

"They became violent and threw food overboard," said another official.

The Seawolf was carrying 1,258 workers expelled from the United Arab Emirates (UAE). It is the second such ship to arrive in Bombay port this week.

The disembarking workers, looking tired and dishevelled, headed straight for drinking water as soon as they got ashore.

Abdul Rehman, 42, who

worked as a cook in Dubai before being expelled, said they had been told in the Gulf that everything would be provided on the ship.

"But there was no food, no place to sleep and only one bathroom for the entire lot," he said.

Raju, 29, a carpenter, said they had been told they would be returning on a passenger ship but it turned out to be a cargo vessel.

"There was no place to sit. No toilet facilities. We had to wait almost an entire day to get the chance to use the toilet," he said.

Seawolf's local agents said it had been made clear from the outset that the Seawolf was a cargo vessel. They said they had made arrangements for transporting the workers to the city's main railway stations from where they could board trains to the southern state of Kerala, where most of them came from.

Officials in the Kerala capital of Trivandrum have estimated the number of workers returning to the state at around 30,000.

On Monday, 1,823 Indians, expelled by the UAE and other Gulf countries for working there illegally, arrived in Bombay on board the Al Madina, a passenger ship.

Palestinian woman 'planted' bomb outside Israeli embassy

The Times of London

A MIDDLE-AGED Palestinian housewife planted a car bomb outside the Israeli embassy in London as part of a plot to disrupt the Middle Eastern peace accord, it was claimed at the Old Bailey on Oct. 7. The other plotters were allegedly three Palestinians who were well-integrated into English society and members of the middle or upper-middle classes. They were graduates of British universities and used their training to help to make the bomb left outside the embassy in July 1994 and a device placed near the headquarters of a Jewish organisation in north London a few hours later.

Nadia Zekra, 50, of West

Kensington, London, denies planting the bomb outside the embassy. Samar Alami, 30, of South Kensington, London; Jawed Botmeh, 28, of Bloomsbury, London; and Mahmoud Abu Wadeh, 26, from Putney, southwest London, plead not guilty to one charge of conspiracy to cause explosions between 1993 and 1995, one charge of possessing explosives and three involving the possession of firearms.

David Calvert-Smith, for the prosecution, said the bomb outside the Israeli embassy was left in a car parked by a middle-aged woman on July 26, 1994. The woman told Police Constable (PC) Ian Duncan, on diplomatic patrol outside the embassy, she was delivering a pre-

sent and had been asked to come back later. The woman told the policeman she was going to buy cigarettes and offered him the keys of her car before walking away. PC Duncan grew anxious and radioed to check the registration. The car seemed genuine but within minutes it exploded, causing five million sterling pound of damage.

The bomb was made with many kilos of a high explosive that left no trace. A similar explosive was used that evening to detonate a car bomb close to Balfour House in Finchley High Street, the base of the Jewish Philanthropic Organisation.

Mr. Calvert-Smith said none of the five was accused of planting the north London bomb. The following day letters claiming responsibility

were sent to two London Arabic newspapers and to the London office of the PLO by a group calling itself the Palestinian Resistance Jaffa Group Palestine.

Mr. Calvert-Smith said Mrs. Zekra was picked out in an identity parade by PC Duncan. Mr. Botmeh, said the counsel, bought the two cars for the bombs at auctions using false addresses and names. Miss Alami had a handwritten list of prominent English Jews.

At Mr. Abu Wadeh's home police found a list of the names of the editors to whom the claims for the bombs had been sent. A fingerprint from Miss Alami was on the paper. The trial continues.



Jackson is big hit in Tunisia

TUNIS (AFP) — Singer Michael Jackson showed once more he is a world phenomenon when he wowed some 60,000 people late Monday in his first concert to be held in Africa and the Arab World. After greeting them in Arabic to wild enthusiasm, Jackson staged a typical sound-and-light extravaganza at an Olympic-style stadium here, including 15 of his best-known hits interspersed with film clips, fireworks and smoke bombs. Young and not-so young Tunisian fans, as well as visitors from neighbouring Algeria and from Europe, marvelled at the special effects as they danced on the grass before the immense stage. The receipts from the two-and-a-half hour concert, the latest on a world tour by Jackson, will be donated to a government aid fund for underprivileged areas. Tunisia went out on a limb among Muslim countries to stage the Jackson show. Planned stops in Morocco and Egypt were cancelled, and on Monday Malaysian authorities said they had told the singer he was not wanted because of "negative effects" he could have on the young.

Gambler jailed for stealing from disabled son

MELBOURNE (R) — An Australian woman was sentenced to 10 months in jail for stealing 130,000 Australian dollars (\$103,000) from her disabled son and feeding the money into poker machines. A court heard that Julie Davis, 54, had power of attorney over the bank accounts of her 26-year-old son, who received 400,000 Australian dollars in compensation after a 1990 car accident that left him a quadriplegic. She stole the money between January 1994 and April 1995, spending 3,000 Australian dollars a week on the machines. Her son had told the court his mother had gambled on poker machines "like they were going out of fashion" and he thought she had stolen at least 200,000 Australian dollars of his money. Ms. Davis, who is destitute and spurned by most of her family, was sentenced to 10 months in jail, six of it suspended.

Rodman hairdo anathema in Filipino school

MANILA (R) — Chicago Bulls "bad boy" Dennis Rodman may have legions of fans around the world, but the basketball star's hairstyle is taboo in at least one Philippine school. Concerned with "good grooming," officials of Wesleyan High School in northern Cabanatuan City are prohibiting their 970 students from colouring their hair in the style of the fiery U.S. National Basketball Association (NBA) player, Principal Juanita Corpuz said Monday. Teachers and parents agreed to impose the guideline after several students had their hair tinted various colours, such as blue and yellow. Ms. Corpuz said by telephone. Mr. Rodman is known for his off-beat ways and constantly changing hair colours. His father, a former U.S. serviceman named Philander, lives in the Philippines. "Maybe he (Rodman) is an idol to them... but we want to inculcate proper values among our students," Ms. Corpuz said.

Quake no inju

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